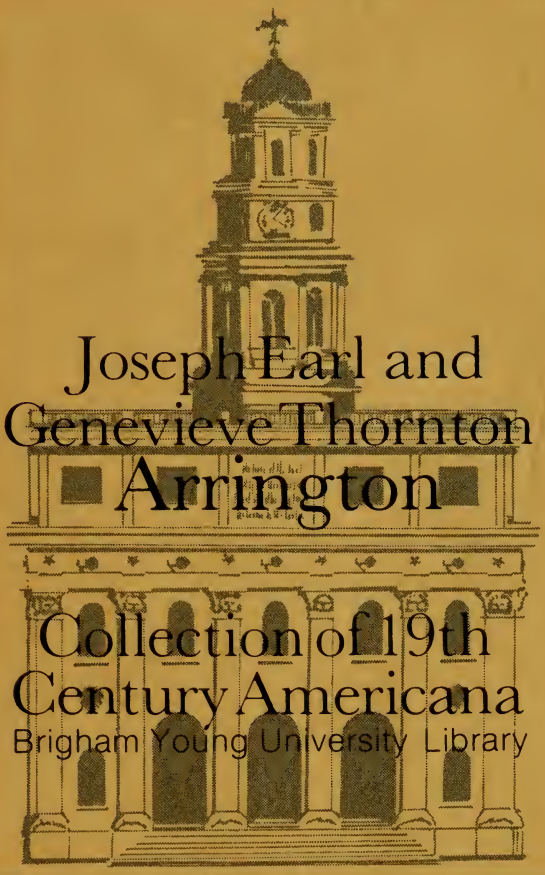

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Life of the Blessed Virgin.

J. A. O'Neill

The Immaculate Conception

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THE LIFE

OF THE

BLESSED VIRGIN MARY,

MOTHER OF GOD.

BY

REV. TITUS JOSLIN.

"Placare Christe servulis
Quibus Patris clementiam
Tuæ ad tribunal gratiæ
Patrona Virgo postulat."

HYMN FOR ALL-SAINTS.

"Una est columba mea."—CANTICLES, vi. 8.

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TO

Our Lady of Perseverance,

QUEEN OF VIRGINS,

IF SHE WILL DEIGN TO ACCEPT FROM ME,

This Tribute

OF LOVE AND AFFECTION.

ON THE

Feast of her Presentation,

NOVEMBER 21, 1859.

DECLARATION.

Conformably to the decrees of Urban VIII., I declare, that for the miracles and miraculous gifts attributed, in this book, to divers servants of God, and which have not yet received the sanction of the Holy See, I expect no belief beyond what is usually given to history supported by human authority; and I further declare, that in styling any one Saint, or Blessed, who has not yet been canonized or beatified, I do so merely in compliance with the familiar custom of men.

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"At the present time, when the progress of Catholicity demands the utmost expansion of literature to repel the erroneous statements of adversaries jealous of such progress, it becomes the duty of Catholics to unite and avail themselves of every means at disposal to advance Catholic literature to the greatest possible extent, and thus co-operate with the missionaries of the Church.

"The best controversial works are at our hands—let us inform our minds fully; the best works of meditation are under our eyes—let us brighten our intellects and strengthen our faith by following the examples laid down for us, and keep always before our mind's eye the glorious old Faith for which the martyrs sacrificed their lives."—*Archbishop Hughes' Preface to Sermon at the dedication of St. Aloysius' Church, Washington, Oct.* 16, 1859.

INTRODUCTION.

The Catholic people seek eagerly after books about the Blessed Virgin, and the demand is more than equal to the supply. Into how many abodes of misery does not some little book of devotion to our Blessed Lady find its way, and cheer and comfort and instruct those who have long loved to salute her Mother of God, Refuge of Sinners, Comforter of the Afflicted, Hope of the Despairing; those who, when temptation and distress set in thick about them, have learned to look above to their beautiful Star of encouragement, and call on Mary. May the glorious St. Joseph deign to assist me while I treat of the Queen of Angels, and to his most powerful patronage, though unworthy, I commend my work. Perhaps some kind reader will say a *Pater* and *Ave* in his honor for the benefit of all who may peruse it, and for me.

Church of St. John the Evangelist.
Feast of our Lady of Mercy.

New York, *September* 24, 1859.

CHAPTER I.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

When the ark of the Testament was to enter into the promised land, the waters of the Jordan held back their floods. The horrible stain of original sin never infected Mary: Almighty God would not have it. The reason was that Mary was to be His mother, and He prepared her both in body and soul to be a fit tabernacle for the Lamb without spot. Thus God, who gave the command to honor father and mother, honored His own Mother. Our Holy Father Pius IX has declared it. It is an article of Catholic faith. St. Andrew, the Apostle, arraigned before the Proconsul Egeus, declared it to be an article of his faith too. Here are his words: "Because the first man had been created of an immaculate earth, it was necessary that the perfect man should be born of an immaculate Virgin, in order that the Son

of God, who had previously formed man, should restore the eternal life which had been lost by Adam." God *could* have such a Mother, and He *would*. With Him was *plentiful* redemption.* It agrees with what is said of her in the Canticles: "Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is no spot in thee." If Mary had contracted the stain of original sin, she would not be all fair. This law was not made for her.† The heavenly city, nothing defiled could enter in her. She was the brightness of eternal light, a mirror without stain, an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain. The Lord was at her right hand that she should not be moved, and most of all at the very moment when the serpent would wish most to see her moved, the instant of conception. Therefore her heart was dilated, and her flesh also rested in hope; because God would not for a moment leave her soul in hell, subject to the powers of darkness, nor give that holy one to see corruption. "Come," says Mary, "and I will tell you what great things God has done for my soul. He possessed me in the beginning of His ways. I was ordained from eternity. The abysses were not as yet, and I was already conceived.‡ He who made me in the Holy Ghost, saw and numbered and measured me.§ He saw his beloved among the daughters of Adam as a lily among thorns. He numbered me, and

* Psalm *de Profundis*.
† Esther.
‡ Prov. viii.
§ Eccles.

I had no equal. God only was above me, and all else beneath me. Eternal Wisdom measured me, and found that my foundations were in the holy mountains, and my throne set in Heaven forever. I loved Him more than the seraphim, in the moment that I began to exist. I was prepared, and built up a living temple for the indwelling of God." Truly was the Blessed Virgin the living temple wherein descended the great High Priest, to clothe himself with our flesh, to go from thence in that vestment and offer sacrifice on the Altar of the Cross. Shall we say less of her than was said of the temple of Solomon? "The work is great, for a house is prepared not for man, but for God." And after all the temple of Solomon was only a shadow of Mary. But St. John Damascene surpasses all in beautiful comparison.

"This is that earth of which Isaias sings, that it shall germinate mercy and bud forth a Saviour. This is that Tabernacle, which is manifest unto the God of Jacob. For a most holy place is prepared for the most holy Word. Let Jacob then cry out—'This is no other than the house of God and the gate of Heaven!' When man through infinite goodness was brought into existence, the heavens were expanded and the earth was spread beneath, and the sea was closed up within its bounds, and all things were produced for the adornment of the Universe. Then, after all, man, royally

adorned, was placed in Paradise as in a school of virtue."

"But when destruction had begun its course, lest what God had made should go to ruin and perdition, he made a new heaven and earth and sea, in which, that he might reform the human race through higher counsel, He might Himself be contained whom nothing ever can contain. This is that Blessed Virgin illustrious in so many ways. O, marvellous work! She is that heaven, for from the most secret treasures of her virginity shone forth the Sun of Justice. She is that earth, from whose undefiled soil grew the wheat of life. She is that sea, which from its deep womb produced the spiritual pearl. How magnificent is this world! What a stupendous creation! Of her Zacharias sings: '*Rejoice and be glad, O, daughter of Zion; for behold I come, and will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.*' And of her it is that Joel exclaims: '*O earth, be glad and rejoice, for the Lord hath done great things.*' For she is that earth, in which, by the Holy Spirit, He was founded in the flesh of whom it was sung: '*Who founded the earth in its stability.*' She is that earth, in which sprang up no thorn of sin, but through whose germination sin was rooted out. She is that earth, not cursed like the former earth, bristling with thorns and briars; but the earth on which came the blessing of

the Lord, since the fruit of her womb was blessed, as it is spoken in the sacred oracle."*

Bishop Ullathorne, in his work on the Immaculate Conception, concludes his chapter on the principle of Exception from Law, with a passage that I cannot refrain from introducing at the close of this. Anticipating a subtle objection, he remarks:

"But God could have made Mary immortal, as well as immaculate, and why then did he not equally do this? For an obvious reason. The death of the body is not an evil in itself like sin and culpability. It may become the occasion of the noblest virtues. Our Lord was crowned with glory for His death. And His Mother shared death with Him. But original sin is an abomination before God."

How can we ever thank God enough that He has brought us to the grace of baptism, and has not abandoned us where Adam left us? *Misericordias Domini in aeternum contabo.* But Mary He redeemed by preventing sin from approaching her, and thus fulfilled His threat to the ancient serpent, "*I will put enmities between thee and the woman,*" (Genesis iii.) He said, I *will* put, speaking in the future tense, because He meant Mary, and not Eve.†

* Hom. de Nativ. B. M. V.

† According to Gentilucci, the Conception of the Blessed Virgin took place in the year of the world 3986. It was on the eighth day of December. Cæsar ruled the world, and Herod the kingdom of Judea.

CHAPTER II.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

God often grants in one short moment, said St. Philip Neri, what we may have been unable to obtain in dozens of years. St. Joachim and St. Anna were very much advanced in years, and chilled by age, when God made them the parents of a child whom all generations would call blessed. The prayer of the humble pierces the skies; and such was the prayer of St. Joachim and St. Anna, who did not depart until the Most High had heard their supplications; and they soon became conscious that Heaven had smiled upon them. "Signs of heavenly favor surprised Joachim, and excited his admiration. In every place where Anna went, joy, hope, and great tranquillity were immediately diffused. She carried with her a secret blessing. If she entered into the house of the sick, as she was accustomed to visit those who were in suffering, the sick forgot his woes, or felt them as-

suaged. If she visited the afflicted, at her approach the afflicted experienced his grief alleviated in his breast; peace and submission to the will of the Omnipotent succeeded trouble and anguish; his imagination was elevated, purified; and he speedily comprehended the non-existence of the major part of his misfortunes, like the transient joys of humanity."*

On Saturday morning, the 8th day of September, our Lady came into the world. O blessed Joachim and Anna, what a daughter have you! She is the throne of God, prepared with royal magnificence! She is the golden candlestick in which is set the light to enlighten the nations! She is the *golden urn* that contained the heavenly manna. She is the Morning Star, and after her the Sun appears over the horizon. She is the beautiful aurora, the harbinger of day; and as the birth of the morning causes a certain joy and solace to all living creatures, so on the birth-day of our Blessed Lady, the angels in heaven, the just on earth, and fathers detained in Limbo felt a joy within them they could not explain. Dear infant Mary, you are all that is lovely in the sight of your God. I wonder not that Joachim and Anna exult, and find the day of your glorious nativity the happiest day of their lives. "Rejoice, O earth, because from the womb of Anna, as from a fertile vine, has sprung a sweet ripe cluster. To the harvesting of this vineyard

* Abbe Gerbet.

all are invited, none are excluded—it is the joy of all."* This is the city of her God, and her God rejoices over her.† Hail, full of grace! To conclude in the words of Basil of Seleucia: "I fear, lest while prepared to say more concerning her, I should say little that is worthy of her dignity, and bring the more shame upon myself. Wherefore I draw in the sail of my discourse, and retire into the harbor of silence."‡

* St. John Damascene. † Isaias lxii. 5.

‡ Basil. Seleuc. Orat. in S. dei Genitricem.

CHAPTER III.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE EARLY LIFE OF OUR LADY.

An angel of the Lord, standing on the right of the altar of incense, declared to Zachary, father of St. John the Baptist, that many should rejoice at his birth,* and many did rejoice; but how many more at the birth of our ever Blessed Lady! So too, when devotion to the Blessed Virgin is born in the soul, it causes therein wonderful joy. St. Anselm says, that to be much devoted to our Blessed Lady, is a sign of being predestinated to heaven. "For with devotion to her," adds De Ponte, "the effects of predestination enter, she negotiating them for such as are devoted to her. She, as a Mother, solicits for us the inspirations of heaven, the vocation of Almighty God, the grace of justification, the victory over temptations, the preservation from falls, the augmentation of merits, the perseverance in grace, and the crown of glory."

* Luke i. 14.

This is a little digression, but a useful one. Our Lady being born, Joachim and Anna, by revelation from God, gave to her the name of Mary: a name which signifies "a Lady," a "mistress of people," "exalted," "illuminated," and also one who illuminates. The name of Mary in other languages signifies, "star of the sea;" and truly she is the light, consolation and guide of those who sail on the sea of this world, tossed with the great waves and tempests of temptations. Never in the world was there so sweet a name as Mary; nor could the spouse in the Canticles better express the gladness of which it was destined to be the channel than by saying that it was "as oil poured out." *Oleum effusum nomen tuum.* A name of unction—a name of grace—a name next to the name of Jesus—the greatest consolation to dying lips.

The infant Mary has reached the age of three years—to be one day the temple of the living God. Many daughters have gathered together riches; she has surpassed them all. No one ever so perfectly corresponded to grace. God would now lead her into solitude, and speak to her heart. So, child though she was, with great love he addressed to her these words of the Psalm: "Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear; and forget thy people and thy father's house; and the king shall greatly covet thy beauty."* Our Blessed Lady hearkened, and St.

* Psalm xliv. 11.

Joachim and St. Anna took her by the hand, and the lovely child followed till they came to the temple, and there they offered to Him, with joyful hearts, what He had given them, because they knew how much He loved her, and how much she pleased Him. Joachim and Anna! Blessed parents, of a child whom all generations sing blessed! O, what a paradise of pleasure for Almighty God was then the Heart of Mary Immaculate, rejoicing at the things that were said to her: "We shall go into the house of the Lord!" "There was indeed a flower of earth, but a flower of so sweet, so lovely a form, so entrancing an odor, that He who first made it bloom, on beholding its perfections, inclosed Himself within its bosom."*

Of the perfect life the Blessed Mary led in the temple during her stay there, of her vow of perpetual virginity, of her perfect exercise of all virtues, her humility, her mortification, her manual labor, her prayer, I need say nothing. The angels of God were in admiration, and asked one another, wondering, Who is this?† "Who is this young maiden, who lives in the desert of this world, and in the solitude of this temple, and springs up, not like a rod, but like a twig that is small and humble in her own eyes, but most odoriferous and gracious in the eyes of Almighty God?"‡

Sufficient for us to say that there was fulfilled in her

* "Faith, Hope, and Charity," Dolman, London.

† Cant. iii. 6. ‡ De Ponte.

that other encomium of her divine Spouse: "My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up." She was the eastern gate of the sanctuary, described by the Prophet Ezechiel:* "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it; because the Lord, the God of Israel hath entered in by it: and it shall be shut. For the Prince, the Prince Himself shall sit in it, to eat bread before the Lord."

Ever fearful lest I should say little worthy of her dignity—the great danger in treating of Mary—once more, like Basil of Seleucia, who had a better right than I to talk about her, I draw in the sail of my discourse, and retire into the harbor of silence!

* Chap. xliv.

CHAPTER IV.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE ESPOUSALS OF OUR LADY.

EVERYTHING that the Blessed Virgin prays for she obtains. *What God effects by his power, you do, O Virgin, by your prayers. Quod Deus imperio, tu prece Virgo potes.* And if God Himself yields to her prayers, who is there that can withstand their force, or hinder their effect? Now, as St. Philip Neri was wont to say, the love which our Blessed Lady had for God was so great, that she suffered keenly through her desire of union with Him: hence the Eternal Father, to console her, sent her His only and beloved Son. The blessed Virgin prayed, and such was the marvellous efficacy of her prayer, that God hastened the time of his Incarnation. True, she was only a child, but the prayer of the humble pierces the skies as did hers, and God rent asunder the heavens that he might descend upon earth, and become man, and invest that little humble child,

scarce sixteen years old, with the unheard of dignity of Mother of God; a dignity so great that the Blessed Virgin herself does not yet fully comprehend it, nor ever will.

"If you would know, says St. Eucherius, "how great is the Mother, think how great is the Son." "To proclaim this alone of the Blessed Virgin," says St. Anselm, "that she is the Mother of God, exceeds every height and name, which, after that of God, it is possible for us to think of."

"*A Virgin shall conceive.*" Wonderful conception, which unites in the one person, Jesus Christ, the nature of God, and the nature of man; the substance of God, and the flesh of Mary, together with a human soul. *A Virgin shall conceive.* It is true. But a Virgin espoused to a man, and he the glorious St. Joseph, adorned by God with most resplendent virtues; the virgin consort of a virgin bride. Why these espousals?

First. God had a care of the honor of His mother, that the Jews should not put her to death as an adultress.

Second. He whose kind providence reaches from end to end mightily, and disposes all things sweetly, would that His dear mother might have such an one as St. Joseph to support and solace her in her afflictions, and to accompany and serve her in her journeyings.

Third. That her Son might have a tutor or foster-father to bring Him up and provide for Him.

Fourth. To magnify St. Joseph, exalting him to such a dignity as to be the spouse of the Mother of God and the foster-father of the Son of God.

The martyr Ignatius adds to these reasons another, why our Lord should be born of a Virgin espoused. "To conceal," says he, "the mystery of the Incarnation from the devil," until such time as God chose to reveal it. So did Almighty God manifest not alone His *infinite power*, but at the same time his infinite *wisdom* and *prudence*, no less admirable than His infinite power.*

Sancta Sanctis. Holy things for holy people. I begin again to fear lest I should say aught little worthy the exalted dignity of the Queen of Heaven. The harbor of silence awaits me. Thither for a time again I retire, invoking ere I do so the Holy Spirit of God, that He will deign to fill my sails for the coming chapter, and enable me to complete, not unsuccessfully, the work of treating of her, on whom to throw light is to obtain eternal life.†

* St. Joseph and our Lady belonged to the same tribe, that of Juda. Feast of the Espousals, Jan. 23.

† Qui elucidant me vitam æternam habebunt.

CHAPTER V.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE ANGEL GABRIEL

God, who has placed His tabernacle in the sun, is ever served by seven spirits, who stand before His throne. So St. John has declared. "John to the seven churches which are in Asia. Grace be unto you and peace from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come, *and from the seven spirits which are before his throne.*"* Who are these seven spirits? *Michael*, who is like God; such is the signification of his name. *Gabriel*, the power of God; *Raphael*, the medicine of God; *Uriel*, the fire of God; *Sealtiel*, the prayer of God; (he is a praying spirit;) *Jehudiel*, the praise of God; *Barachiel*, the blessing of God. They are all his ministers, who do His will, and now His will is to give notice to Her who is to be the Mother of the Word Incarnate, through the embassy of a most glorious angel. St. Luke, instructed by our Lady herself, has recorded in

* Apocalypse, i. 4.

few words what then passed. "In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a Virgin, espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house and family of David; and the Virgin's name was Mary."*

The archangel is clothed with fortitude to accomplish that for which he was sent. The Blessed Virgin kneels in prayer. St. Gabriel, taking of the air a most beautiful body of human shape, with great modesty, reverence and gravity, enters that room in the holy house of Nazareth, and presents himself before her. "His salutation was new, and never before heard of in the world, devised by the most holy Trinity, to honor the sacred Virgin."†

"*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.*"

Basil, Archbishop of Seleucia, has paraphrased it, "*Hail, full of grace!* Let thy face be joyful, for from thee shall the joy of all be born; and He shall take away their ancient execration, dissolve the empire of death, and give to all the hope of resurrection. *Hail, full of grace!* most flourishing paradise of chastity; in which is planted the tree of life which shall produce for all the fruits of salvation; and from which the fountain of the Gospels shall stream to all believers in floods of mercy from their fourfold source and

* Luke i 26. † De Ponte.

spring. *Hail, full of grace!* mediatrix of God and men, through whom the middle wall of enmity is cleared away, and earthly things conjoined with those of heaven. *The Lord is with thee!* for thou art a temple truly worthy of God, and odoriferous with the aromatics of chastity. In thee shall dwell the great High Priest, who, according to the order of Melchisedech, is without father and mother—of God without mother, of thee without father."

Our Lady being troubled at this salutation, the angel, as good angels are wont, quieted her. "*Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David his father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever.* AND OF HIS KINGDOM THERE SHALL BE NO END."

Our Blessed Lady, then, is to be the mother of a King, who has written on his thigh, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS: of whose kingdom there shall be no end; for it is His Church, against which it is written the gates of Hell shall not prevail, let them do their utmost endeavor. In that Church the Mother of the great King will be ever loved and honored by the people of God, and in it will her own prophecy

be fulfilled, that *all generations shall call her Blessed*, for she is the Blessed Virgin. Isaias foresaw it all: "A Child is born to us; and a Son is given to us; and the principality is upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, God, the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of peace. His empire shall be multiplied; and there shall be no end of peace; He shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and with justice."*

The angel has delivered his message. How is it received? She *whose lips were as a scarlet lace and as a dropping honeycomb*,† answers with words well guarded, much pondered, and uttered with calmness, sweetness, and charity.‡ "And Mary said to the angel, How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answering said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee; And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren. Because no word shall be impossible with God."

The words that followed were as the words of the priest at the consecration of the sacred host; for in the

* Isaias ix. † Cant. iv. 3, 11. ‡ De Ponte.

moment that our Lady completed them, God came down from heaven, became incarnate, and she found herself His mother.

"And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word."

Then the angel departed from her and went back to heaven.

St. Proclus, who, in the year 429, preached a magnificent sermon on the Blessed Virgin, in the great church of Constantinople, shall conclude this chapter.

"We celebrate her who is Mother at once and Virgin. Lovely and wonderful is this union. Let nature rejoice, and mankind exult, for women have also received their honor. Let men show their delight, that virgins are held in esteem. For, where sin abounded, there grace has superabounded. For now the holy Mary, Virgin Mother of God, brings us together. That undefiled treasury of virginity; that spiritual paradise of the second Adam; that laboratory of the union of natures; that mart of the commerce of salvation; that bridal chamber, in which the Word espoused flesh unto Himself; that animated bush of nature, which the fire of the divine faith consumed not; truly the bright cloud, which bore Him bodily who sits upon the cherubim; the most clean fleece of the celestial shower, with which the Shepherd put on the condition of the sheep. Mary, I say, handmaid and Mother,

Virgin and heaven; the only bridge of God to men; the awful loom of the Incarnation, in which, by some unspeakable way, the garment of that union was woven, whereof the weaver is the Holy Ghost, and the spinner the overshadowing from on high; the wool, the ancient fleece of Adam; the woof, the undefiled flesh from the Virgin; the weaver's shuttle, the immense grace of Him who brought it about; the artificer, the word gliding through the hearing. Who ever saw, who ever heard how God dwelt in the womb, yet suffered no limitation; and now, Him whom the heavens do not contain, the Virgin's womb did nothing straiten. He is born of woman, not God only, not merely man, and by his birth He made woman the gate of salvation, who before had been the gate of sin. For, where the serpent entered through the way of disobedience, and shed his poison, there the Word, through the way of obedience, entered and built a living temple for Himself."

O Mary, Mother of God, Gate of Heaven, pray for us!

CHAPTER VI.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

VISIT TO ST. ELIZABETH.

A THRILL of joy untold has passed through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for her own heart's blood flows now through the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ, the *abbreviated Word*, and then back again through hers. Joy loves to communicate itself, and love knows no delay. Like an arrow, drawing in her train thousands of beautiful angels, she flies to meet St. Elizabeth. Seventy miles over rugged mountain passes, and the house of her cousin greets her view. Full of grace, Mary carries grace and benediction wherever she goes. At the sound only of her salutation, St. John the Baptist leaps for joy, and like the prophet Jeremias, is sanctified in his mother's womb. I do not wonder at what our Lord said to St. Bridget: "There were three saints whom He loved before all others—the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. John the Baptist, and St. Mary Mag-

dalen." O, joyful salutation of Mary! Not only is St. John sanctified. His father Zachary, dumb for six months, recovers his speech: Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Ghost, and apprehends her glorious cousin's dignity. "Whence this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?"

But even from heaven our dear Lady will come, when her presence is required; be it in sorrow, in trouble, or at the hour of death. She came to St. Francis, the bearer of joyful tidings. She presented herself before St. Alphonsus Ligouri, when he was preaching about her. She showed herself to Father Alphonso Salmerone, when he was dying, because in life he had loved her. "Whence this to me?" might all have said; but all knew her kindness and compassion.

There is a heavenly canticle which in beautiful Gregorian chant resounds at the hour of Vespers through Catholic churches. The Blessed Virgin Mary first sang it herself, and the Holy Ghost made the harmony for her. Her heart uttered a good word, and she declared her works to the King, or rather the wonderful things he had done for her. St. John the Baptist heard it for the first time, and hearing, his infant heart beat high with joy. *Magnificat anima mea Dominum.*

The soul of Mary magnifies the Lord—magnifies Him who is immensity itself. "Were it allowed me," says Segneri, "to put a construction of my own upon the

Blessed Virgin's words, I would say that she is so exceeding great in the order of grace, that she even magnifies her own Maker. She means not that she magnifies her Maker in Himself—who could suppose it? But yet she does magnify Him to our perceptions, just as the intervening atmosphere magnifies the orb of the sun to our eyes. This she has done more particularly in two respects. First, she has given to Almighty God the greatest prerogative, and the noblest title that he possesses, next to His own essential attributes, which is to be the God of God Himself. For before she became the Mother of His Son, He was only the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of all the just; but now, by her means, He is truly the God of Christ, and consequently the God of God Himself. In the second place, for the Blessed Virgin, such intimate companionship with so great a Son, and to make her the only Mother worthy of such a Son, as Christ was the only Son worthy of such a Mother, far greater treasures of grace were expended than were ever employed for the sanctification of all the other saints. With truth therefore may she entone her magnificat, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord.'"

"I leave you to think," says St. Francis of Sales, "how good an odor this fair lily diffused in the house of Zachary, during the three months she was there."

CHAPTER VII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

ST. JOSEPH PURPOSES TO FORSAKE OUR LADY.

Between the two most joyful periods of her life, our Lord permitted to His dear Mother a severe trial. St. Joseph became conscious of something he could not explain. He dared not suspect anything wrong—the fact could not be overlooked. Being a just man, he had a mind to put her away privately. Perhaps, half suspecting the secret of Almighty God, he felt his own unworthiness of such a charge, in the spirit of St. Peter, who entreated our Lord to depart from him, for he was a sinful man. Now, it is the office of good angels to clear away trouble and perplexity ; and this a good angel did for St. Joseph—appearing to him as he slept, commanding him not to fear, bidding him continue his care of Blessed Mary, and instructing him to call our Lord by the adorable name of Jesus, when he would be born ; all of which St. Joseph exactly fulfilled as the angel commanded him.

This was not the last time that St. Joseph held converse with angels. The angels loved him, and often visited him: he was dear to God, to angels, and to man. God gave him to his holy Mother to be a solace to her, and not to cause her distress; and a great comfort he was, until his most peaceful death, which happened in all likelihood when our Lord was about twelve years old. Jesus and Mary assisted him in his last moments, and graciously recreated his sight, as he lay between them. The remembrance of them rejoiced his heart, till on the day of our Lord's resurrection he arose with Him and went to paradise. O happy death —to close one's eyes with the impression of Jesus and Mary remaining on them, imprinted in the soul! Then may one walk securely in the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil, since God is with him. Death, as we see it, is only the shadow. Nothing deserves the name of real death but that which is eternal. St. Joseph grant that we may know only the shadow, visited by Himself and holy Mary as we pass the shade, opening our eyes in paradise to behold their glory, when the shadow is passed. In the mean time, dear reader, implore St. Joseph to be my patron and protector, as I beg him to be yours. May he assist us in our last agony!

CHAPTER VIII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

CHRISTMAS.

THE birth of Jesus Christ our Saviour was the second earthly joy of His Blessed Mother. Conducted by St. Joseph, she went to Bethlehem to be enrolled Night set in on them just as they reached the town walls. Every house in the place was crowded: but God had reserved for Himself and His dearest Mother a place of entertainment. It was a cave in the rock which formed a part of the wall of the town. In the cave there was a manger, and over the manger stood an ox and an ass. There, at the solemn hour of midnight, she brought forth her only begotten Son, as light penetrates crystal, and the crystal remains unbroken, clear and resplendent as ever. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, spread her white woolen cloak in the manger, then laid Him in it, and the ox and the ass warmed Him with their breath, for fire there was none. After that, prostrate she adored Him, and St. Joseph

came in and adored Him too ; and all heaven rang with the angels' canticle : "*Glory to God in the Highest, on earth peace to men of good will.*" Then from fountains filled from heaven, she gave Him to be nourished of her own pure milk ; she embraced Him tenderly, and caressed Him, and her joy was full. The whole scene brings us back again to the contemplation of her exalted dignity. "Would you know what the Mother is, consider what the Son is."* "A mutual love, in some sense infinite on both sides, entitles her to address Him, 'My beloved to me and I to him.'"† "Either the spouse," adds St. Bernard, "glories of herself immensely too much, or else she is immensely beloved." St. Bernardine of Sienna comes yet nearer the truth. "So great is the perfection of the Blessed Virgin, that the knowledge of it is reserved for God alone." "The flesh of Christ," says St. Augustine, "was the flesh of Mary ; and although it was raised to great glory in His Resurrection, yet it still remained the same that was taken from Mary."‡

Who can ever conceive the loveliness of the Blessed Virgin, as she knelt before the manger ? How young ! Only fifteen ! And yet the Mother of God ! The sight of her delights the blessed child Jesus when he awakes from sleep. Everything about her is beautiful and surpassing. "How beautiful art thou, and how comely,

* St. Eucherius. † Segneri. ‡ Serm. de Assumpt. c. 5.

my dearest in delights. Thy neck as a tower of ivory. Thy head is like Carmel; and the hairs of thy head as the purple of the King bound in channels."*

"Which of the seraphs could ever say to the Lord omnipotent: Thou art my Son; this day have I conceived Thee! Jesus is born, and His features are a copy of her features, as He lies in the arms of His mother. They converse together through each other's eyes, and the soul of Mary is the mirror of the soul of Jesus. And He puts His divine head upon her bosom, and drinks of her fountains, "filled from heaven,"† *ubere de cœlo pleno*. Why should not the lovely Virgin Mary be the most beautiful of all creatures, since God made her to be His Mother? This is she who has become in His presence as one finding peace.

* Canticles, vii.

† Bishop Ullathorne. Treatise on the Immaculate Conception.

CHAPTER IX.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

ADORATION OF THE MAGI.

THE glory of Mary must be divulged even to the nations ; and the first fruits of them in the persons of the three Magi coming to seek the chief corner-stone, Jesus Christ, find Him nowhere else but with Mary, His Mother. Caspar, Melchior and Balthazzar, the three kings from the East, guided outwardly by a star, and inwardly by the grace of the Holy Ghost, pass presently through Jerusalem, to the alarm of Herod, and then having completed a fatiguing journey of thirteen days, reach the stable cave. The King they came to visit being on his throne, their spikenard yielded to him a most delicious odor. The child Jesus sat in the lap of the Virgin Mary to give them reception. She was His throne, prepared with royal magnificence. The Magi entered, and she received them most graciously, and showed to them the Eternal God in the diadem of human flesh, wherewith she had crowned Him. Prostrate

they adored the King of ages, on His throne; then opening their treasures, offered him gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh; gold to their king; frankincense to their great High Priest; myrrh to honor the future burial of one who had made Himself mortal. Our Blessed Lady with her divine Child blessed them. She instructed them in the rudiments of the Christian faith—she who herself afterwards taught the evangelists what to write concerning the birth of Christ. Every word she uttered so sweetly, and with the majestic dignity that became the Mother of God, went to their hearts, inflamed them with the love of God, and profound devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. They departed, leaving to her disposal all the rich presents they had brought to her infant Son. It is Mary, Virgin and Mother, who is now also the dispenser of all the graces that the goodness of God concedes to the sons of Adam. On their way home the Magi talked of Mary and sang her praises. Through them the gentiles came to the knowledge of Jesus and Mary together, because the Magi found Him not alone, but *with Mary His Mother*, and they could not preach the knowledge of Him without also preaching the knowledge of her.

What they declared of her beauty, dignity, gentleness, and charity, astonished the nations. Nor did their devotion stop only with words.* Not only were glori-

* Probatio delectionis exhibitio est operis.

ous things said of the *city of God*, but glorious and enduring proofs of love were at the same time shown. No sooner were they baptized by St. Thomas the Apostle coming unto the East, than they erected there a church in her honor. The Queen of Candace did the same in Ethiopia ; St. Martha in Marseilles ; St. John in Asia, and St. Peter in Rome, as the prophet Elias, even before her birth, had by divine revelation done on Mount Carmel.* Segneri, the learned and devoted servant of our Blessed Lady, is my authority for the above facts, and a beautiful and suggestive passage from his celebrated work, "Servant of Mary Instructed," will put the finishing touch to the present chapter.

"'When the fullness of time was come,'† the Church militant upon earth had so well learned from the Church triumphant in Heaven how to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary, that, even while she was still living, the faithful came flocking from all parts to Nazareth, to see her and become acquainted with her, esteeming any intercourse with the Mother of God so great a happiness and honor that they thought the mere sight of her more than sufficient recompense for the long journeys which they had taken from the most remote parts of the world. Nor was it only the common people, who are easily misled, that displayed this pious eagerness. The Apostles themselves, as they were the first in dignity and authority

* "Virgini parituræ." † 1 Gal. iv. 4.

amongst the faithful, were the first to set an example of zeal in paying honor to the Blessed Virgin. Thus the great St. Denis* attests that he himself was present when several of them, and among the rest St. Peter, the head of them all, came from different parts of the world to visit her, with no other object than that of contemplating once more the greatest work of the Divine Majesty, and devoutly celebrating the praises of its Almighty Author. 'For no other purpose,' he says, "than in order to contemplate Mary, and from contemplation of her to ascend on high, as their limited powers would reach, in the praises of the Almighty Goodness.'"†

* St. Dionysius the Areopagite.

† S. Dion. de Div. nom. c. 3.

CHAPTER X.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE PURIFICATION.

EIGHT days old, our Lord was circumcised. Cornelius, a Lapide, says that this took place in the very cave where he was born, the ceremony being performed by some Priest or Levite. It gave the holy child more pain than other children, because he was much more sensitive to touch than they, and because, too, he enjoyed the use of reason, which other children do not. Then He began His passion, by which He became the Redeemer and Saviour of the world. Then He received the adorable name of Jesus, which means a Saviour, and which was revealed to the Blessed Virgin by the angel before he was conceived.

By taking on Himself our infirmities, as He did on this day of His circumcision, and satisfying for them to God, He merited the power to heal in this life and in the next all our temptations, sorrows and afflictions, whether of mind or of body.

"Do you labor with fear, with scruples, with anger, with sloth, with vain-glory, with grief, with poverty? Invoke Jesus, and you will find him a consoler and a Saviour."* Thus much concerning the painful circumcision of Jesus Christ, and first shedding of His precious blood, which, if our Blessed Lady did not perform, at least she witnessed when He received His Name. His birth, as we have before remarked, was as the passage of a ray of light through pure crystal; the crystal remaining unbroken and unhurt. The Holy Virgin Mary had no more need of purification than He had need to submit to the painful law of circumcision. Yet as He submitted to that, she also complied with this.

"When the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord."† The prophet Malachy had predicted this occurrence: "Presently the Lord, whom you seek, and the Angel of the Testament, whom you desire, shall come to His temple. Behold He cometh, saith the Lord of hosts."‡ He came in the arms of Mary. A prophet awaited them, and consolation awaited him, for the Holy Ghost was in him. Simeon took our Lord out of the Blessed Virgin's arms into his own, blessed God that he had lived to see

* Cornelius a Lapide, in Cap. ii. Luc.

† Luke ii. ‡ Malachy iii.

the desired of nations, sang *Nunc dimittis*, and uttered a prophecy concerning the Blessed Virgin, which did not receive its entire fulfillment until Jesus hung dead on the cross. "This child is set for the ruin and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. *And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed.*" Behold the first of the seven dolors. The most sweet soul of Mary the sword of grief must pass through. Why? Because it behooved Christ to suffer and die, and so to enter into His glory. Because His heart beat first in unison with hers, and was formed in her womb, and lived of the same life, when she drew breath and He did not. Because of the wonderful sympathy that ever subsisted between them, so that the martyrdom of His passion must be her martyrdom by compassion. She said as much to St. Bridget: "The grief of my Son was my grief, because His heart was my heart."*

"The pain that was spared her at His birth," says St. John Damascene, "she underwent in the time of his passion, when her bowels seemed torn in sunder by reason of the vehemence of her grief."† This is holy ground on which to tread—the mutual love of Jesus and Mary. The sword of love had already wounded her most sweet soul, and like an arrow transfixed it. She loved Jesus as her God and as her Son. Yet, all

* Rev. L. i. cap. 10. † L. 4. de fide, cap. 15.

lovely as He was, He was set as a sign that should be contradicted. This did not become entirely evident till all the hidden malice of His enemies was let loose in the time of His passion. Then the malice of one who was a murderer from the beginning became fully apparent. They blasphemed relentlessly, because their mouths spoke out of the abundance of most malicious hearts. No mark of bitter hatred was concealed. Our Lord, like the Catholic Church, was a sign set to be contradicted; and the knowledge of all this sent a bitter pang through the heart of Mary. This sorrow kept her company all her life.

This compassion of the Blessed Virgin is now become a wonderful source of grace and fortitude to us, for we too have our sorrows and unhappinesses, and in a desolate world Mary has become our love and our consolation, *sciens infirmitatem*, knowing our infirmity, knowing too well herself what real and unalloyed sorrow is; but become through that very experience immensely powerful to strengthen and to console. Let but one of her hot scalding tears fall into our torrent, and from bitter and intolerable, it becomes sweet and delightful to endure. God knew what was good for us when He permitted His own dear Mother to drink of the chalice of His passion. Ungrateful we if we forget to meditate those dolors. May the passion of Christ and the com-

passion of the Virgin Mary be ever in our hearts and our bodies!

Father Faber will permit me to conclude with a few lines from his "Foot of the Cross," a work treating professedly of the Sorrows of Mary. "Happy they, and true sons, whom our Father punishes in this life! Like Mary, we must be loving, sweet, and patient with those who cause us any unhappiness, and, laying our head with unrestrained and unashamed tears on our Lord's bosom, let us think quietly of God and heaven. It is not a slight consolation for life-long mourners to know that our Blessed Lady was a life-long mourner too. Let us be of good cheer. Let us look our great sorrow in the face, and say to it, "You have made up your mind not to part with me till I go down to the grave; be, then, a second guardian angel to me; be a shadow of God, hindering the heat and glare of the world from drying up the fountains of prayer within my heart."*

* "Foot of the Cross," Chap. II.

CHAPTER XI.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

THE flight into Egypt, the sojourn there, and the return, are scenes in which Jesus, Mary and Joseph are more than ever contemplated together, as the Holy Family. "From Egypt have I called my Son." But first He must go there. What takes Him? The jealousy of Herod, who cannot bear to hear Him called King. God always has an asylum ready for His loved ones, ere the hour of danger comes. Danger now is near, and Egypt is ready. The bow is bent, the arrow is sped, but already the angel of God has aroused St. Joseph from sleep, and busy preparations are going on for departure. *Dedisti metuentibus te significationem, ut fugiant a facie arcus.** Mary sits on the ass with the child in her lap, St. Joseph leads the bridle, and soon they are all out on the open road, with the green grass under them, and a bright starry sky overhead to give them light. It has

* Ps.

become necessary for God to fly from before the face of His creature. As they enter Egypt, the idols on either side fall to the ground as they pass. Egypt for a time is to be no longer the land of idols, but the first school of religious orders, in the Church's younger days. A house is hired in Heliopolis, and St. Joseph finds work for the support of his precious trust, and our Lord is pleased to permit him to put His God under a hundred everlasting obligations to him, never to be forgotten. To the people of God he is to be from heaven what Joseph of old was to them on the earth, a powerful helper in every kind and description of necessity. Here for the rest of the chapter I drop again my own pen, mindful of the admonition of St. Philip Neri, that we are to prefer in our reading, and to make way for the writings of the saints, or as he was wont to express it, the writings of authors whose name begins with S. St. Bonaventure has written of the flight into Egypt, and described the whole scene from beginning to end, in a way that bids defiance to competition. The seraphic Doctor shall speak, and I will be silent.*

"The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying that he should fly with the child Jesus and his Mother into Egypt. So Joseph, without delay, informs the mother, who is all obedience and zeal to

* The translation of this passage, from St. Bonaventure's "Life of Christ," is that of Kenelin H. Digby. *Mores Catholici*, book 1st, chap. ii.

save the life of the child, and they set out in the night to go into Egypt. See and meditate on what is said, and how they raise the sleeping child Jesus, and feel compassion for them ; for then the tribulation of the mother and Joseph was great, when they found that there was a design against the life of the child ; for what could they hear more grievous, since, though they knew that He was the Son of God, yet through their sensuality they might be troubled and say, 'Lord God Omnipotent, what need is there that Thy Son should fly ? Can you not defend him here ?' Moreover, there was tribulation from the length of the journey before them, and their ignorance of the way through rough places, and from their being but ill able to travel, from the youth of Mary, and the old age of Joseph, and the infancy of the child which they had to carry ; and they would have to dwell in a foreign land as poor people, having nothing, for all these are matter of affliction. Consider the benignity here shown—how soon he suffers persecution, and how he yields to the fury of men, and refuses to attack in his turn. The Lord flies before the face of his servant. They fly into Egypt by a way woody and dark, rough and solitary, and very long. For them it was a journey of about two months or more. How did they procure food and lodging for the nights ? for rarely did they find houses in that desert. Compassionate them, because the labor was diffi-

cult, and great, and long, and go with them, and help to carry the child, and serve them in every way that you can imagine.

"Now let us behold them arrived, and here will be another ground of meditation. For how did they live during all this time? Did they beg? The mother earned what was needful by spinning; and when the child was five years old, did he not often carry her work for sale. And perhaps at times some proud and loquacious woman would take the work, and send him away empty, without the price. O, what injuries await strangers; and the Lord is come, not to avoid, but to endure them! What, and if returning home, and having hunger, after the manner of little boys, he asked for bread, and his mother had none to give him? Must not her bowels have yearned at this? But she consoled her son, and procured work, and perchance deprived herself of part of her food, that she might reserve it for him. On these and similar things you can meditate respecting the boy Jesus. I have given you the occasion, do you extend and pursue it, and make yourself little with the little boy Jesus, and do not disdain such humble and puerile things. For they seem to give devotion, to increase love, to kindle fervor, to excite compassion, to confer purity and simplicity, to nourish the vigor of humility and poverty, to preserve familiarity, to make conformity, and to raise

hope. For we cannot ascend to sublime things; but the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and such meditations cut off pride and weaken cupidity, and confound curiosity. Therefore I say, be little with the little, and grow tall with him as he grows in stature, and always follow him whithersoever he goes, and always behold his face.

"At the end of seven years, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, 'Take the boy and his mother and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead who sought the life of the boy.' Now let us meditate on this return of our Lord, for it is full of pious fruit. Let us suppose ourselves in Egypt, for the sake of visiting the boy Jesus, whom you will find, perhaps, amongst other boys; and he, seeing you, will come up to you, because he is benign, and affable, and courteous; but you, bending a knee, will kiss his feet, and receive him in your arms and rest with him. Then, perhaps, he will say to you, We have leave given us to return home to our country, and to-morrow we are to set out from hence; and you will answer joyfully that you are glad of it, and that you are to go with him wherever he may go, and with such words be delighted with him. And then he will lead you to his mother, who will receive you with courtesy; and you, bending a knee, will show her reverence, and also St. Joseph, and you will rest with them. The next morning you

will see some good matrons of the city, and also some men coming to see them set off, and following them without the gate of the city, on account of their amiable and holy conversation, and from their having talked of their journey some days before. So they walk on, and Joseph, with the men, goes first, and our Lady follows from a distance with the matrons. But do you take the boy by the hand, and walk in the midst before the mother, for she does not wish him to be after her. And when they have passed the outer gate, Joseph will not allow the rest to follow them any longer. Then some one of the richer sort, pitying their poverty, calls the boy to give him some pieces of money towards the expense of the journey, and the boy is ashamed to take it; yet through the love of poverty he prepares his hand, takes the money and returns thanks; many of the friends do the same; the mother is called by the matrons, and they do the same. Nor has the mother less shame than her son, albeit humbly she thanks them. At length, thanking them all, they wish them farewell, and proceed on their journey. But how is the boy Jesus to return, who is still but a tender child? It seems to me that the return is more difficult than the first coming; for when he came into Egypt, he was so little that he was carried; but now he is so big that he cannot be carried, and yet he is so little that he cannot go by himself. Perchance some one of these good men accom-

modated him with an ass, upon which he might go. O admirable and delicate boy, king of heaven and earth! how thou hast labored for us, and how soon thou didst begin! well did the prophet predict in your person, '*Pauper sum ego et in laboribus a juventute mea.*"

Then St. Bonaventure goes on to tell how they came to that part near the end of the desert where St. John the Baptist, boy that he was, was doing penance, though he had done no sin, and the holy Doctor invites you to bend the knee to John, and kiss his feet, and ask his blessing. He was the first hermit, a most pure virgin, the greatest preacher, more than a prophet, and in the end a glorious martyr. Again I am not surprised at what our Lord told St. Bridget: "Three he loved, and none so much as them; His own dear Mother, St. John the Baptist, and St. Mary Magdalen."

CHAPTER XII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

MARY LOSES THE BOY JESUS.

For one more chapter I give place to St. Bonaventure, for this third sorrow of our Blessed Lady, as he has depicted it, is too surpassing to be omitted. "When the child was twelve years old he went up to Jerusalem with his parents, still going through labors; and he went to honor his heavenly Father in his festivals, and so he stood observing the law, and conversing humbly along with others, as if he had been only any other poor little boy. And when the days were accomplished his parents returned, and he tarried in Jerusalem.

"And now attend well, for you will be shown a devout and fruitful matter. Nazareth was distant about fourteen or fifteen miles from Jerusalem, so when the mother and Joseph, returning by different roads, had reached the place where they were to lodge, it being late, our Lady, seeing Joseph without the boy, whom she believed had been accompanying him, she asked him, 'Where is

the boy?' And he replied, 'I know not; he did not return with me, for I thought he had returned with you.' Then she burst into tears, and said, 'He did not return with me. I see that I have not well guarded my child;' and so immediately, that is, as quickly as might accord with decent grace, she went about to all the houses, asking for him, and saying, 'Have you seen my son?' 'Did you not see my son?' and scarcely through grief and ardor did she feel her desire. Joseph followed her in tears. Not finding him, you can judge what rest that mother had. And though encouraged by her acquaintances, she could not be comforted. For what was it to lose Jesus? Behold her, and compassionate her, because her soul is in straits; never since her birth had she been in such. Let us not, then, be disturbed when we suffer tribulation, since the Lord did not spare his mother; for he permits them to come, and they are signs of his love, and it is good for us to have them. At length, our Lady, shutting herself in her chamber, had recourse to prayer and complaint, saying: "O God and Eternal Father, most clement and benign, it was your pleasure to give me your Son; but lo! I have lost him, and I know not where he is. Give him back to me. O Father, take away my bitterness, and show me my son; have regard to the affliction of my heart, and not to my negligence; I was imprudent, but I did it ignorantly; but give him back to me,

for without him I cannot live. O dearest child, where are you? what is become of you? with whom are you? Are you returned to your Father who is in Heaven? I know that you are God, and the Son of God, but how, would you not have told me? O say where you are, that I may go to you, or that you may come to me. It is but a moment since I have been without you, and I know not how it has happened. Never since you were born was I before alone.'

"With such words did the mother mourn all the night for her dearest son. Early the next morning they sought for him through all the ways, for there were many ways of returning, as if he that would go from Sienna to Pisa, might go by Podium Bonichi, or by Celle, or by other places. On the third day they found him in Jerusalem, in the temple, in the midst of the doctors. Then she rejoiced as if she had been restored to new life, and bent her knee, and thanked God with tears. But the boy Jesus, seeing his mother, came up to her, and she received him in open arms and kissed him, and put face to face, and holding him to her bosom, remained without moving for a short time, because through tenderness she could not then speak. At last, looking on him, she said, 'Son, what hast thou done? thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.' And he, 'Wherefore didst thou seek me; knewest thou not that I must needs be about my Father's business?' But they

understood not his words; therefore his mother said to him, 'Son, I wish to return home; will you not return with us? And he, 'I will do what you please;' and he returned with them to Nazareth."

Who so well as St. Bonaventure could have described our Lady's three days' sorrow, and then her joy when it was over? If you use a beads of the seven dolors, you will henceforth, dear reader, say that third mystery with fervor, and you know already that special graces attend devotion to the Sorrows of Mary.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

NAZARETH FOR EIGHTEEN YEARS.

Quibus te laudibus efferam nescio. How with sufficient praises to greet thee, O Virgin daughter of Sion, I know not, for He whom the heavens cannot contain thou didst carry in thy womb. "If you hold an apple in your hand for half a day," says St. Bernard, "does not your hand keep the sweet odor of it for the other half day?" But Mary carried the sweet Jesus in her womb for nine months, and after that reared him up during the space of twelve years; and then from that time till he was thirty nothing more is recorded of Him than that *He was subject to them*, that is, to Mary and Joseph. O how redolent of the Sacred Heart of Jesus must have been the Immaculate Heart of Mary! Everything about her breathed of Him and only of Him. What said she to St. Bridget? That *as Adam and Eve had sold the world for an apple, so Christ and her*

*self had redeemed it as with one heart.** There is a space of eighteen years, and Jesus lives with his mother Mary, her whole joy and consolation. During a part of this time St. Joseph still lives. The three eat at one little table every day, converse together, take recreation together, pray together, and then when night comes the Lord Jesus composes himself to sleep upon a poor bed on the floor, because the house was small. O Holy house of Nazareth, small indeed in dimensions, but large enough to contain three such hearts as never were contained in this world before. Never was God so loved in one house before, nor so well pleased. Nazareth, well named *a flower*, where grew up Jesus the flower of the field, beside Mary the lily of the valley. There Jesus made it his pleasure to do Mary's will. She was in this world his terrestrial paradise, as she was destined by Him to be the chief ornament of the heavenly one. To what, then, shall we liken her, or to what shall we compare this city of God, of which such glorious things have been said, whose lamp is the Lamb, nor needs she other light? To what shall we liken her? To a city seated on a hill, since her foundations are in the holy mountains, on the highest summit of the Seraphim. To a pearl of great price, since she was an object worthy of having an infinite treasure, such as the

* Sicut Adam et Eva vendiderunt mundum pro pomo, sic Christus et ego redemimus quas iuno corde.

Blood of Jesus expended for her redemption. To a splendid diamond, such as the world never before nor after possessed, 'since Christ on her, out of the treasury of His richest merits, has conferred incomparably more grace and glory than He has done, not only upon men, but even on all the angels themselves.'* In a word she was one among thousands. 'My young maidens are without number; but One is my dove, my perfect one is but One; she is the only One.'†

"Such was the mother from whom our Lord parted at the age of thirty years. 'Be comforted, mother, for I shall soon return to you;' and bending his knee, he besought her blessing, and she similarly bending, with tears embraced him. Then he departed and took the road from Nazareth to the Jordan, where John was baptizing."

* Segneri. † Canticles vi. 7, 8.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

CANA OF GALILEE.

St. John baptized our Lord, who had no need of baptism, declaring first that he was unworthy to loose even the latchet of his shoes. As he ascended from the water, raising up with him the world depressed by sin, Mount Hermon* exulted, for a beautiful white dove descended on him, and the Eternal Father thundered from heaven in great Majesty: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then our Lord began to preach and to baptize, and to establish the first beginnings of that kingdom of which there should be no end. Then He collected disciples for the first foundations of His Holy Catholic Church, and invited them to leave all things and follow him, and their reward would be to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And twelve went with Him, whom He taught how to fish for men, to save them out of the terrible sea of the world

* Thabor et Hermon in nomine tuo exultabunt.

in which so many are lost—and now, as then, as many as are to be saved are daily added by the successors of the apostles to the company of the Church, for out of it there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. The Church then was being planted, small at first as a grain of mustard seed, but presently to become in this world a great tree, so large that the birds of heaven would nestle in her branches. "Now, when we plant a little strawberry vine," says St. Gregory, "while it is young and tender we water it and nourish it, till it has well taken root, and needs no more such care."

So did our Lord with his Church, the vineyard, with the love of which He became so inebriated as to go the length of shedding His own blood for it. Till it struck deep root in the world he watered it with wonderful miracles, which, as St. Paul says, are a sign for the unbelieving.* As yet Jesus had worked no miracles, and the reason that he assigned afterwards was because His time had not yet come. The Blessed Trinity held their own secrets. There was a time for everything; a time for the Son of God to be born into the world, a time, and a long time too, to abide quietly at home with His Blessed Mother, a time to leave her and begin His pub-

* That is not to say that miracles are not worked in every age of the world in the Catholic Church, when and where God sees fit; nay, even every day; but they are less needed now than at first, when nations were to be converted. Our Lord Himself would not work miracles merely to gratify curiosity. There is always external evidence enough.

lic mission ; a time, also, to work that miracle which, in future ages, would be recorded as the first of the long series of wonders that attended His life on earth, when He went about doing good. When would that first miracle be ?* What time He had appointed no man knows, perhaps not till the nearer approach of his passion. But this we do know, that He anticipated the appointed time, and anticipated it at the request of the most Blessed Virgin Mary. Let hostile critics make the most of those one or two passages, where, addressing her as woman, He can be made to seem on the surface, at first sight, to speak as though she, of all other creatures, were not the one nearest and dearest to His heart. I care not.

There is question now of a fact. *For her* He worked His first miracle. What will He not do to please her ? Taking from her the weakness of human nature on Himself, He has in return clothed her with some of the attributes of His own Divine power. My argument is a strong one. What Mary asked for she obtained. Find me *one* instance where she asked, and did not obtain. There is one instance recorded where she made a request, and it is there in the same place recorded also that she obtained it. There was a marriage feast at

* "When He said 'my hour is not yet come,' He meant that the time destined for the performance of miracles was that of His preaching through Judea."—St. Alphonsus Liguori.

Cana of Galilee, and our Lord and His Blessed Mother both went to it, and made all happy with their lovely presence. All was peace and joy, for the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary beat in their midst. Perhaps some of the disciples were there too, St. Peter, St. John, and St. Andrew. The wine failed ; our Lady was all compassion, as she is now. She knew that Jesus was omnipotent. He could whatever he would. He would whatever she asked. Something was wanting to the happiness of their guests, and it would add to hers to see the want supplied. She knew before she spoke that the least intimation of her own good pleasure would be enough.* Jesus did not easily misunderstand her. It is not the first time she has whispered a request on behalf of the needy. O beautiful lips, as a scarlet lace dropping honeycomb! *They have no wine.* Then she said to the waiters, "Whatsoever he shall say to you, do." Her prayer has prevailed, as it always does. There were six large water pots of stone. Our Saviour prepares to work his first miracle. "Fill the water pots with water; and they filled them up to the brim." They put in water indeed, but they did not take out

* "The tenderness of Mary's heart, which cannot but pity the afflicted, moved her to take the office of advocate, and, without being asked, to entreat her Son to work a miracle. Unasked, she assumed the office of an advocate, and a compassionate helper. Hence, if unasked, this good lady has done so much, what will she not do for those who invoke her intercession? *Si hoc non rogata perficit, quid rogata perficiet.*"—St. Bernardine of Sienna.

water. It was beautiful wine, such as they had never tasted before; some of the first fruits of Mary's prayers, she who is ever ready to invite us to 'come and eat the bread and drink the wine that she has mingled for us.' Plenty is in her hands. All the rich ones have sought her countenance, for she is the daughter of the Great King. She is ever more ready to bestow favors than we are to ask. Is your soul languishing for the want of the wine of God's love? Let her but say the word and the King will take you into His cellar and set in order charity within you. *Ad te clamamus, ad te suspiramus.*

We cry to her, we sigh to her, for never was Mary invoked in vain, never her prayer denied.

CHAPTER XV.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE BRIDEGROOM AND THE BRIDE.

THE life of our Blessed Lady during a period of three years is nearly a sealed book, for the obvious reason that the Evangelists labored not to produce a life of the Blessed Virgin, nor even a complete life of our Blessed Lord—but only a compendium of the more important circumstances attending His public mission, all

of which can be summed up in two words, *pertransiit benefaciendo*, He went about doing good.

But the sacred hearts of Jesus and Mary were never disunited, nor was she a stranger to His counsels. As Adam and Eve sold the world for an apple, Jesus and Mary redeemed it as with one heart. "Blessed the womb that bore thee and the paps that suckled thee!" exclaimed the woman in the crowd, and He did not say not blessed, but more blessed yet, that she of all others had heard the word of God and kept it, and ever lived in such perfect and entire conformity with the will of God. At another time the crowd, imagining him to be attached to His mother and cousins with merely human affection, whispered, "Thy mother and brethren stand without desiring to speak with thee;" and He gave them to understand again that He loved in proportion as He found hearts conformable to His own. But where one so entirely one with His own, as the Immaculate Heart of Mary? Who are these who would make these two passages detract from the glory of Mary?

Are they those who love the honor of the mother of Him who has written on his thigh, King of Kings and Lord of Lords? Are they unaware that the Psalms and book of Canticles, and the whole eighth chapter of Proverbs are taken up with the glories of His mother, the Queen who stands in Heaven at His right hand, in

a vesture of gold, clothed round about with variety? Are they ignorant that the whole Old Testament is full of types and figures of her; that she was ever present to the Divine Mind, that the Holy Ghost depicted her before ever she was born into this world? And St. John in the Apocalypse has surpassed all; his pen, too, guided by the same spirit that penetrates even the deep things of God. Now he presents her to our view as a woman clothed with the sun; then as the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, as a bride adorned for her husband; and then in still another place, as the Ark of the Testament opened in heaven. Our Lord Himself, too, makes the contemplation of her beauty and majesty one of the rewards of eternal beatitude, and not the least at that.

The elect of God are figured under five virgins, with lamps, who, after this life is over, go out to meet *the bridegroom and the bride.** O bride of the Lamb, O most sweet Virgin Mary, how beautiful and lovely thou art! a very paradise of celestial delights! Thou art the throne of God, prepared and adorned with magnificence unsurpassed. Thou sittest a Queen, for God has assumed thee into heaven, body and soul, that thou mightest pacify Him for us by thy prayers.† Be thou ever our peacemaker with thy Son.

* "So true it is that all the saints in heaven are ordained for the greater glory, not only of Christ, but also of Mary—His Virgin Mother." —SEGNERI. † Vid. Secret. Orat ad missam Vigiliæ Assumptionis.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE WOMAN IN THE CROWD.

In the eleventh chapter of St. Luke, an allusion is made to the holy Mother of God, which should not be passed unnoticed in a life of Mary. A woman, most probably St. Marcella,* raised her voice in the crowd as Jesus passed: "Blessed the womb that bore thee and the paps that gave thee suck." Blessed the womb of the Virgin Mary! This womb was the temple, the bridal chamber, the heaven, the throne of the glory of God. "Think then," says Cornelius a Lapide, "with what gifts of grace it was adorned to be a worthy place for God." How holy ought to be that womb, which the sanctity itself of God not only sanctified and consecrated to itself by inhabiting for nine months, but also by taking flesh and nourishment from it. Hence the Church, alluding to these words, frequently sings, *Beata viscera Mariæ Virginis.* Blessed the womb of

* Servant of St. Martha.

Mary the Virgin that bore the Son of the Eternal Father, and Blessed the paps that suckled Christ the Lord. "Thou bearest Him who carries all things with His word."* St. Gregory of Nicomedia calls her "the glorious throne and royal vehicle carried on which the Word came into this world with flesh." St. Ignatius martyr, in many epistles he wrote to her, saluted her as *Christifera*, bearer of Christ; "a great title," says St. Bernard, "and commendation of immense honor, to serve whom is to reign, to carry whom is not to be burdened but adorned. "How familiar, O Lady, art thou become to Him, how near, how intimate, how great grace hast thou found with God! He remains in thee and thou in Him; thou clothest Him and thou art clothed by Him; thou clothest Him with the substance of flesh, and He clothes thee with the glory of His majesty; thou clothest the sun with a cloud, and in turn thyself art clothed with the sun."†

Sing rather to the Blessed Virgin than to Judith. (cap. 15): "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people, because thou hast done manfully, therefore the hand of the Lord hath strengthened thee, and for this thou wilt be blessed forever." Blessed forever the Virgin Mary that she bore the Son of the Eternal Father, more blessed if you will,

* Mellodius. † S. Bernardus Serm. 7 in Psalm, *Qui habitat.*

for her most exact conformity in all things to His holy will, and that she both heard and kept the Word by whom all things were made, that was in the beginning, that was with God, and that was God, who made her to be his Mother. "O thou Mother of all graces, methinks neither my soul nor any other sinful soul requires a passport or permission to repair to thee. The more sinful a soul is, the more reasonable it seems to her that she should have free access to thee; the deeper she is in wickedness, the more reason she has to press forward to thee. O think, think, thou mild Queen elect, that thou derivest all thy merits from us poor sinners. What was it made thee God's Mother, a casket in which the Eternal Wisdom reposed? O Lady, it was the sins of us poor mortals did it! How couldst thou be called a Mother of graces and compassion, except through our wretchedness, which has need of grace and compassion? Our poverty has made thee rich; our crimes ennobled thee above all pure creatures! O turn hither, then, the eyes of thy compassion. Take me under thy protection, for my consolation and reliance are in thee. How many a guilty soul, after having bid farewell to God and all the heavenly host, by denying God and despairing of Him, and so being lamentably separated from Him, but which still clinging to thee, has been sweetly held back by thee, till at last through thy intercession it has again attained to grace! O

how unfathomable is the being whose name is so rich in grace!"*

CHAPTER XVII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

PRELUDES TO THE PASSION.

Our Lady is soon to be mother of dolors, bereft of consolation, but not of superhuman fortitude. He parted not from her at Nazareth till she blessed Him, nor did He enter into His bitter passion till she gave a farewell consent. Soon He would be in the depths of that sea, and the dark tempest of desolation would overwhelm Him. But one last interview with Mary remained. This took place after the Last Supper. A little lamb, sent by the Holy Virgin,† lay on the table for the Paschal solemnity. Its head was adorned with a crown, and on its back it carried a board bound round its middle with cords. The Supper being ended, our Lord made a memorial of all His wonderful works, and instituted the Blessed Sacrament. To this He was moved not a little by His unspeakable love for the Blessed Virgin. It was to be her greatest consolation during twelve long years after

* Henry Suso. † Catharine Emmerich.

His ascension into heaven, and of the faithful forever after till the end of the world, who in it receive not a relic of her garments, but her own flesh and blood, since the *flesh of Jesus is the flesh of Mary.* "My brethren," said St. Peter Damian, "I entreat you to consider how deeply indebted we are to the Blessed Mother of God, and what thanks we should render to her, since we receive at the altar the same body which she has conceived, borne in her womb, and wrapped in swaddling clothes, and that we drink her blood in this sacrament of our redemption."

What happened in the paschal cenacle after this, St. Bonaventure will depict. "When the supper was ended, the Lord Jesus goeth to His Mother, and sitting with her apart, converses with her, giving her the consolation of His presence which He was so soon to withdraw from her. Regard them now well, sitting there, and see how reverently our Lady regards Him, and affectionately lingers by Him; and in like manner how reverently our Lord acts towards her. O dearest Mother, the will of the Father is that I eat this Pasch in Jerusalem, because the time of redemption has come; now shall be fulfilled all that is written of me, and they shall do what they will. His mother, scarce able to utter the articulate words, says: 'My Son, I am all shaken at this word, and my heart fails me. May the Father provide, for I know not what to say. I will

not gainsay Him; but if it be pleasing to Him ask Him to defer it, and let us eat this Pasch here with our friends; and if it be pleasing to Him, He will be able to provide for redemption without Thy death, for all things are possible to Him.' "*

But it behooved Christ to suffer and die, and so enter into His glory. Presently He went to the Garden of Olives, and His agony began. At the end of it He was apprehended, and telling His apostles He must die on the morrow, begged them to console His mother and Mary Magdalene. Then He was led before Annas, and from Annas to Caiphas, mocked, scourged, spit upon, blindfolded, struck, denied by Peter, crowned with thorns, led forth to be crucified. "The Holy Virgin was constantly in interior union with Him; she knew all that He suffered, and suffered with Him. Like Him she never ceased praying for His murderers; but the cry of her maternal heart pleaded with the Eternal —rather that their crime should not be consummated, and that the heavy sorrows of her divine Son should pass away from Him. Her desire was irresistible to be near Him. When John sought her, and recounted to her the horrible spectacle he had just witnessed, she asked Magdalene and some of the other holy women to accompany her to the place where Jesus was suffering."†

* St. Bonaventure's Life of Christ. † Catharine Emmerich.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE COMPASSION OF MARY.

"*I have trodden the wine press alone, and of the nations, there was not a man with me.*" The grain of wheat, the first blade of which grew in the pure earth of an unspotted Virgin's womb, will now fall into the ground and die, to rise in multiplied fruit. In the wine press of agony, scourging and crucifixion, the earth that produced but briars and thorns to a Saviour, will be thrice dyed crimson. He will tread and be trodden alone; no *man* will be with Him. But the Virgin Queen of Martyrs will be with Him, trodden and bruised through most vehement compassion, till like a fair lily her wounded heart far and wide diffuses a sweet fragrance redolent of bitter pain. To what shall I liken thee, or to what shall I compare thee, O Virgin daughter of Sion, for great as the sea is thy affliction. Who can heal thee? On two great altars the expiation is made. What the heart of Jesus suffers in His

passion, that of Mary undergoes through compassion for her dying Son.

His agony, His exposition to the populace, His scourging, His mockery, His crowning with thorns, are but preludes to the great sword of sorrow that will presently pierce her soul. The Cross has been put on His bleeding shoulders and she meets Him carrying it. It is her fourth dolor. You have, perhaps, seen His mangled and disfigured face on a copy of Veronica's handkerchief. If you have, you know something of the anguish of Mary. She follows the procession to the top of Mount Calvary. St. John is there, and Mary Magdalen. The Cross is raised, and Mary stands under it, and stands till all is over. Who shall move her? Like the one white candle at *Tenebræ*, faith may be darkened in every other heart, never in hers. *I am black but beautiful.* Do not consider her that the sun has altered her color. She is sorrowful but lovely; never so lovely before. Being in an agony, she prays, and her prayer converts the robber, and the multitude go home weeping and striking their breasts.

The head of Jesus expiring falls towards Mary, after that He has uttered the ever memorable words, *Behold thy mother;* and her fifth dolor over, she stands at the foot of the Cross, the Mother of all the faithful, the advocate of all sinners, the solace of all the wretched, the succor of the miserable, the salvation of all who

invoke her for all ages to come. Mary's prayer will never be denied. The words, faint as they were, did the work of a seal on her heart, and imprinted there the character of a universal Mother, a character never to be obliterated. The world feels it. She has become the hope even of the despairing, "*an immense abyss of grace.*" The body of God hangs dead on the Cross. The soul is indeed gone, but the divinity is never separated from it. Mary is still there. A soldier comes up, and contemplating for a moment the second Adam sleeping in death on the cross, opens his side with a spear, whence blood and water issue forth.

Who feels that wound? Not the dead Christ. He suffers no more. All was consummated when He bowed His head. But the soul of Mary is there where her eyes are fixed, and through her sweet soul the sword passes before it reaches His Heart. When Simeon held Him in his arms, he told her that that day would come, and it has. *Thy own soul a sword shall pierce.* Now is the time. This is the hour of her transfixion, and through the bitter agony of it she has become more than ever what Father Segneri calls her, *an immense abyss of grace.* Such a wound as our Blessed Mother received then, she can never forget. Let us never forget it ourselves. The lance that parted in sunder the sacred side of Jesus, and opened to us the treasures of His divine Heart, passed first through the most sweet

soul of the Virgin Mother Mary. Behold two hearts transfixed with one spear! Presently the soldiers parted His garments, and cast lots upon His vesture. That seamless tunic the Blessed Virgin wove for Him, with her own delicate hands. It was a pledge of her love, and a symbol of the sacred humanity wherewith she had clothed Him.

What a sight! That precious garment, bathed with the blood of her blessed Son, in the hands of those wretched miscreants! "The fierce beast of envy has fastened Him upon the Cross, and has dyed his garment with the blood of His own veins. O fierce envy, how darest thou devour Him who is charity itself!"*

In the evening, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus came to take the adorable body down from the Cross, and the Blessed Virgin, and St. John, and St. Mary Magdalen were still there, full of anxiety because they did not know how to do it themselves. But Joseph and Nicodemus did the work, and reposed the lifeless body on the lap of the Virgin Mother,† whose soul was pierced with sorrow, since now He had filled her with bitterness, and inebriated her with wormwood.‡ And Mary Magdalen came again and knelt at those feet where she had received the pardon of her sins, and her

* De Ponte, Med.

† "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, he shall abide between my breasts."—*Canticles*, i. 12.

‡ Lamentations, iii. 15.

heart was wounded, and her eyes became a fountain of tears. The soul of St. John, too, melted with compassion at the sight of that breast on which he had leaned his head the night before. But one more sorrow remains to our Blessed Lady, and it is the loneliness of His burial, and the desolation of that dismal Saturday night, when she sat solitary, full of grief. His sepulchre, like her own sacred womb, was new, in which never was any man laid before. There they laid Him, and she with the greatest courtesy thanked them, and her bitter solitude began. "How is the mistress of the Gentiles become as a widow? Weeping, she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; there is none to comfort her among all that were dear to her."* Even St. John could not console her.

"Comfort thyself, O sovereign princess, let thy sighs and mournings cease, let the stream of thy tears be stopped, because the grain of wheat which thou hast hid and sowed in the sepulchre, within three days will rise up alive with most glorious fruit, to render thee a hundredfold of consolation, for this, thy sorrow and desolation."†

* Lamentations, i. 1. † De Ponte, Med.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

MARIA DOLOROSA.

Let us pause a little ere we have done meditating the sorrow of Mary, who complained to St. Bridget that very few compassionate her in her sufferings, and said to her, "If others forget me, you at least, daughter, must not forget me." It was revealed to St. Elizabeth, a Benedictine virgin, that our Lord has four graces for those who are devout to the sorrows of His Mother. First, that whoever invokes her by her dolors, shall have the grace of doing penance for his sins before death; secondly, that she shall console such in all their tribulations, and especially at the hour of their death; thirdly, that the Lord shall imprint on their minds the recollection of His passion, and inspire them with a devotion to it; fourthly, that He has empowered Mary to obtain what graces she pleases for those who are devout to her dolors.

The first of these beautiful promises reminds me of

a remark of Kenelin H. Digby, in the fifth book of "Ages of Faith." "If the recollects of Liege said that the worship of the Blessed Virgin, even in those who lived sinfully, was a sign of predestination, they spoke to men who knew their meaning, and who, therefore, received their words as teaching it to be a sign that they would cease to live sinfully; and if Francis Mendoza said it was impossible that such a person should perish, his readers interpreted his words as teaching that it was impossible he should not be converted to a holy life; and this precisely on the principle which every one concedes to St. Ambrose when he said to the holy widow of Ostia, who mourned over the errors of her predestinated child, that it was impossible the son of such tears should eventually be lost forever. Would it be very difficult to qualify that mind which could not be made to comprehend why a secret reverence for the Blessed Mother of Jesus should furnish proof that the sparks of virtue were not wholly extinguished in the heart."

Ah, our Blessed Lady is the magnet of hearts. Our Lord said as much to his dear St. Catharine of Sienna: "My Blessed Mother is that most sweet food, *esca dulcissima*, by which I attract sinners to myself." Under the Cross, in unutterable grief her compassion obtained this for her.

"Pure Lady and noble Queen of Heaven, touch my

stony heart with one of thy scalding tears, one of those which thou didst shed in bitter distress for thy tender child under the wretched Cross, so that my heart of stone may be softened, and may hearken to thee ; for heart-rending grief is of such a nature that no one can have a true knowledge of it, except he whom it touches. Tell me how thou didst support thyself, when thou didst behold thy tender child, the beautiful and Eternal Wisdom, expire so lamentably."*

Dr. Bonns, in his "Shadows of the Rood," has instituted a beautiful comparison between Eve mourning over Abel slain, and Mary at the taking our Lord down from the Cross : "Let us compare Abel and Jesus in the *circumstances* of death. Amongst these is not to be passed over what the Holy Scripture expressly relates, that Abel was not slain near the habitation of Adam and Eve and their children, but *foras in agro* —'without in the field.' So, also, our Lord Jesus Christ was led by His executioners out of Jerusalem, to be crucified on Mount Calvary : *educant eum ut crucifigerent.* 'They led Him forth to crucify Him.' Next, that Abel suffered in the prime of youth. Jesus, likewise, suffered in His prime, fulfilling the prophecy of the holy King Ezechias : *In medio dierum meorum vadam ad partas inferi.* 'In the midst of my days I go to the gates of the grave.' Again, the Holy Fa-

* Henry Suso. "Little Book of Eternal Wisdom."

thers state from Hebrew tradition, that Abel's death-wounds were dealt with the branch of a tree: Christ's death-wounds, too, were dealt with the branch of a tree —the branches of the Cross.

"But what must have been at Abel's fate the grief of his mother Eve. Now she saw what death was; as yet she had not seen. Now she saw the terrible reality of that sentence: *Morte morieris.* 'Thou shalt die in death.' Ah! with what copious floods of tears did she bathe the stiffening limbs of her innocent son, slain by his guilty brother's hand, who was himself her son! Does not this sad scene prefigure the terrible grief of our Blessed Lady over the body of her Son Jesus, slain likewise by His brother's hand? I mean not the Jews only, for we also, who by our sins have wrought His death, are His brethren and Her children! Now was fulfilled the prediction of Simeon: *Tui ipsius pectus pertransibit gladius.* 'A sword shall pierce thy breast.' Now was brought to pass the word of Jeremias: *O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte si est dolor, sicut dolor meus.* 'O you, all who pass by the way, stay and see what sorrow is like to mine.' The sorrow of Mary, with Jesus lying dead in her arms, become for her, indeed, a bundle of bitter myrrh, a cluster of purple grapes! *Fasciculus myrrhæ dilectus meus mihi; inter ubera mea commorabitur.* 'A bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me; He must lie

between my breasts.' *Botrus cypri dilectus meus mihi in vineis Engaddi.* 'My Beloved is to me as a purple cluster in the vineyards of Engaddi.'

"Nor was Eve alone in her desolation. What now became of Abel's sheep? Doubtless they were scattered about on the hills and rocks, making them echo with their sad bleatings, as they wandered hither and thither in quest of their gentle shepherd, and found him not. So was it with the disciples of Jesus, as He had Himself foretold on the last evening, quoting the prophetic words of Zachary's song: *Percutiam pastorem et dispergentur oves.* 'I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered asunder.' They were scattered, 'every one to his own,' and left Him alone in the terrible scenes of His Passion, all except His Blessed Mother, with her cousin, and those two chosen types of innocence and penitence, St. John and St. Mary Magdalen: 'There stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and her cousin Mary, and Mary Magdalen, and the disciple whom He loved.'"

CHAPTER XX.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

RESURREXIT SICUT DIXIT.

A BEAUTIFUL canticle resounds through Catholic churches when Holy Saturday is over. *Regina cœli lætare alleluia.* "Rejoice, O Queen of Heaven, alleluia! For He whom thou didst deserve to bear, has arisen as He said He would. Pray for us to God." This angelic hymn was adopted by the Church about the year 590, to be sung during the paschal time, itself first sung by angels, while the prayers of this Queen of Heaven dissipated a dreadful pestilence that then laid waste to Rome.

Our Lord arose. He went out from the rocky sepulchre, and left it as intact as He did His blessed Mother when He was born into the world. The guards fell down as dead, and He sped His way, all early in the morning, to meet and console her whom He loved before all others. The angel Gabriel had already broken to her the most joyful news, saluting her as Queen of

Heaven, and bidding her rejoice. Then Jesus arisen came in, and she knelt in adoration to the glorified body, and beheld all splendid the marks of His sacred wounds, and of the diadem of thorns, and kissed most reverently feet, and hands, and sacred side.

Catharine Emmerich has described vividly the whole of this joyful scene: "I saw a resplendent light between two angels clad in warlike array. It was the soul of Jesus, which, penetrating the rock, came to rejoin His most holy body, taking possession of it instantaneously. I saw the limbs move, and the body of the Saviour, united to His soul and divinity, disengage itself from the winding sheet. It was brilliant with glory. I soon saw Jesus rise and leave the tomb. The earth trembled, and an angel, as a warrior, darted like lightning from heaven into the cave, turning aside the stone and seating himself upon it. The guards had fallen as if struck by apoplexy, and lay senseless upon the earth. Cassius, seeing the brilliant light within the tomb, approached it and touched the empty linen. He had felt the earthquake—had seen the angel remove the stone—but he had not seen Jesus at the moment the angel entered the tomb, and the earth trembled.

"Jesus arisen, appeared to His mother upon Mount Calvary. He was marvellously and radiantly beautiful—His garment seemed floating about Him as a cloud of lightish blue—His wounds were large and luminous,

and you might have passed a finger through those of the hands. The rays darting from these wounds seemed to reach the ends of His fingers. He showed them to His Blessed Mother, and as she bent to the earth to kiss His feet, He took her by the hand, raised her, and disappeared." Thus far Catharine Emmerich.*

St. Vincent Ferrer asserts that our Lord coming into the presence of His Mother, saluted her, 'Peace be with you;" that He Himself embracing her with the most tender love, wiped away His Blessed Mother's tears, and said: "Rejoice, my dearest Mother, henceforth thy life shall be a life of joy and happiness;" and that then He sat down beside her, and they conversed sweetly together.†

During forty days our Lord remained on the earth, "speaking of the Kingdom of God," and instructing the apostles in many important things concerning the future government of His Church; but His most frequent visits were to the Blessed Virgin Mary. And when at last He took them all out a far as *Mount Olivet*, and with face turned to the west, in the act of blessing them, departed from them, gladly would she,

* St. Bridget, whose revelations are of more authority, has something to the same purpose: "My Son appeared to me, who am the Mother of God; since after His death I was sad with incomprehensible grief, He showed Himself palpably to me, before others, consoling me, although this is not written by reason of my humility; nevertheless it is the truth, that my Son rising, appeared to me before any other."—Rev. S. Bridget, B. 6.

† See Gentilucci's Life of B. V. M.

too, have followed after. But her time was not yet come. For their consolation and instruction, and for the good of the rising Church, she must remain. The Lord arose into his resting-place, leaving the ark of His sanctification to remain for the day of her own glorious Assumption, and till then be Queen of the Apostles, and Mistress of the Church.

With her they assembled in the upper room, awaiting the day of Pentecost. With her they prayed during the whole ten days; and when at last the Holy Ghost came, like a rushing wind, and sat in flames of fire on the heads of each—He came so soon because with them and for them Mary prayed. She has not ceased to pray for the people of God and for His Holy Church. There were present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost certain followers of the prophet Elias, who dwelt on Mount Carmel, where Elias himself had instructed his followers to venerate the Blessed Virgin, since he had seen her figure in the small white cloud that arose out of the sea.* These good men, already converted by the preaching of St. John the Baptist, and afterwards made Christians, on that day made the acquaintance of our Blessed Lady, and became exceedingly devoted to her. They visited her often during the time she dwelt in Jerusalem, and received many marks of favor from her.

* See Book of Kings, chap.— and Catharine Emmerich's Life of B. V. M.

These became the first beginnings of the Order of our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel in the Catholic Church; and the Catholic reader need not be informed that to wear the brown scapular affiliates him to that ancient and celebrated Order, and secures a title to the perpetual protection of the ever Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Mother of God after this remained some time in Jerusalem, where the apostles, and especially St. Peter, St. James, and St. Andrew, went often to visit her, as St. Dionysius the Areopagite, their contemporary, attests in his work, *De Divinis Nominibus*, still extant. The records of the first council of Ephesus state that afterwards St. John and herself dwelt for a number of years in that most favored city; though on the eve of her glorious Assumption into heaven, St. John, at her own request, took her back to Jerusalem, in whose courts her feet were wont to stand—Jerusalem built as a city that is at unity with itself, where joyfully she might sing on the eve of approaching dissolution, as we do now at her own Vespers: *I rejoiced at the things that were said to me; We shall go into the house of the Lord.*

O Virgin Mary, thou who knowest so well how to make bitter death sweet to thy servants, enable us also when it is coming to be light of heart, and sing a most joyful *Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sunt mihi.**

* See Psalms in the Vespers of the Blessed Virgin. Why do our choirs sometimes neglect them?

CHAPTER XXI.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

ASSUMPTA EST MARIA IN CŒLUM.

Heaven wanted its chiefest ornament until the Blessed Virgin went there. God left her on the earth that the Church might learn by experience her value. While she lived at Nazareth and at Jerusalem, the faithful, no less than the apostles, came flocking from all parts to visit her, and glorious things were said of this glorious city of the Most High, whose soul magnified her own Maker, whose countenance reflected the surpassing beauty of her Immaculate Heart.

But the Heart of Mary, like a clear waxen torch, burned every day more ardently with the pure flame of God's love, kindled from the Sacred Heart of Jesus, whose Heart in her own womb was formed.

The flames of that pure waxen torch rose every day higher, until love would no longer suffer soul and body to remain together. "Alas to me that my sojourning is prolonged." *Heu mihi quia incolatus meus prolonga-*

tus est. "I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that if you find whom my soul loves, you say to Him that I languish with love." And the answer to that sweet message is ready. "Now the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers have appeared in our land, the time of pruning is come; arise, my love, and come. Come from Libanus; thou shalt be crowned."

The Angel Gabriel is sent to tell her that all heaven is waiting for her, and she rejoices in the things that are said to her about going into the house of the Lord.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is about to die, and Almighty God, by an act of His Divine power, assembles the apostles from every part of the world, who find themselves transported on a sudden to Jerusalem, and standing around her bed. One only, St. Thomas, is absent. Perhaps it was a part of his penance for former incredulity. Then Mary dies. Flame meets flame—two Sacred Hearts are consumed with one fire, united, never to part again. In an extacy of love Mary dies, and her most beautiful soul goes right to heaven. Her lovely body, purer than the newly fallen snow, still remains. It is the tabernacle in which that charity, which is of God, rested bodily for nine months. It is the holiest thing, next to the dead Christ, that was ever left for three days on the earth. It is the ark of His sanctification, that is to follow Him into His own resting-place. It is the undefiled earth that never knew

sin, whence the new Adam's body was formed. It is the untilled earth whence sprang the first blade of the heavenly wheat of life, the earth that opened and budded forth a Saviour. In a word it was the body of the Virgin Mother of God! Behold what a treasure the Apostles bore on their shoulders to the tomb—the body of her whom St. John Damascene called the animated Ark of the living God!

Nor did they leave her. Three days and nights did Peter and James and John and Andrew and the others guard the deposit, and listen to the melodious canticles of angels that filled the air. Then St. Thomas arrived, and he must needs have the tomb opened, and see what remained of his Lord's Mother. But to the astonishment of all, no Blessed Virgin Mary was there! There was indeed a delightful and heavenly fragrance, as of many aromatical spices, the odor of Paradise that Mary ever breathed. There were indeed the linen and the grave clothes. But our Lady was gone—gone to heaven, body and soul, to be crowned its Queen, and have yearly celebrated in the Catholic Church the feast of her glorious Assumption. *Cœlum cœli Domino*—"The Heaven of Heaven to the Lord." The Heaven of Heaven itself, was made on purpose to be the delightful abode of her Sovereign Lord, and to abide with Him forever, where all is all we can desire, and nothing defiled can ever enter.

A Queen she stands at his right hand, in a vesture of gold, clothed round about with variety—the glory of the militant as well as of the triumphant Church, clothed with the Sun, having the Moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. The King of Heaven has put a diadem on her head and made her to reign. Mighty, as she sang herself, He has done great things for her, and holy is His name; and since she became the City of her God, glorious things have been said too of her.

Now she prays unceasingly for sinners, sometimes even for those who do not invoke her. May her gracious prayers obtain for us the wedding garment of charity.

"O sovereign Virgin, obtain for me such purity of life, and such fervor of charity, that my soul, departing from my body, may immediately fall into the arms of her beloved, and may ascend with Him to the house of my Mother, where thou, my true Mother, dost dwell, rejoicing with thy Son, world without end. *Amen.*"*

* De Ponte.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE GLORY OF MARY.

Terra dedit fructum suum. The earth has yielded its fruit, and that fairest of earth's fruit, the new tree of life, is now planted forever in Paradise. Of her fruit we may still eat, and whosoever eats of it worthily has with him a pledge of eternal life. She is the house that the Lord built, nor did He labor in vain when He built it. She is the City that He guarded, nor did He watch in vain when He guarded it. She is the earth that is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, because the fullness of the Blessed Virgin Mary was the man, Christ Jesus, whom she surrounded. She is the magnificence of God, exalted above the heavens. She is the tabernacle of the Most High that He has sanctified, and the dwelling near her is as of all that rejoice. He that created her rested in her tabernacle. She is the mountain of the house of the Lord, prepared on the tops of

the mountains, and exalted above the hills.* *Si esuriero non dicam tibi; pulchritudo enim agri mecum est.* "The beauty of the field" is now with the Lord. Mary is assumed into Heaven—Christ *ascended* by His own divine power. Mary is *assumed*, taken up, leaning on her Beloved, amid hosts of wondering angels, singing in grand chorus, "Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights?" Then truly a torrent of delight inundated the city of God, when her gates were raised up for the King's mother to enter in. "And the King arose to meet her, and bowed to her, and sat down upon His throne, and a throne was set for the King's Mother, and she sat on his right hand."† That is her place forever, since he has put the diadem on her head, and made her to reign. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love Him."‡

What then has He not prepared for her who conceived and bore Him; not to say loved Him more than all loving hearts put together? "To him that shall overcome I will give to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on His throne.§" What then has He not prepared for the Blessed Virgin Mary, who appeared in Heaven as a

* Isaias ii. 2.
† 3 Kings ii. 19.
‡ 1 Cor. ii. 9.
§ Apoc. iii. 21.

great sign, a woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars? The dragon, a manslayer from the beginning, sought her life and the life of her child, and her child was God. But she overcame. There was war in heaven, and St. Michael fought her battle, and the dragon went to make war with the rest of her seed, the Church of her adorable Son.

Faithful of Christ, people of God, do not fear. The prayer of Mary pleads for you. The Mother of God intercedes. St. Michael stands ready at her bidding to do your battle, be the work never so arduous. In peril, then, and in danger, let the name of Mary be the watchword. While you live in this world you live on the sea, but Mary ever shines overhead, where her throne is forever set by God. "Turn not thine eyes away from this Star, if thou wouldst not be overthrown by storms. If there arise any winds of temptation, then look up to the Star—call on Mary. By following her thou canst not lose thy way; by imploring her, thou canst not despair; by thinking of her, thou canst not wander; when she upholds thee, thou canst not fall; when she protects thee, thou canst not fear; when she guides thee, thou canst not weary; when she is favorable, thou wilt attain thine end; and so wilt thou experience in thyself how justly it was said, 'And the Virgin's name was Mary.'"*

* St. Bernard.

"Thee raised a Queen above the sky,
With sweet and gladsome melody,
The angelic choir applauds;
For meet it were earth, sky and sea
Should chant with universal glee
Our sweetest Lady's lauds.

"Thy fav'ring ear in pity lend
To us who on thy will attend,
Our death-bound spirits free;
The first of all in Heaven save One,
Grant us, thy clients, with thy Son,
Co-heirs of God to be!

"He with the Eternal Father pleads,
His body pierced, and Heart that bleeds;
But thou, thy Mother's breasts;
And shall such advocates be slighted,
When Love's sweet tokens, all united,
Enforce their strong behests?"*

* *Paradisus animæ.* "The name of Mary," says St. Anthony of Padua, "is honey in the mouth, melody in the ears, sweetness in the heart." This Saint died singing *O Gloriosa Virginum.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

A COMPENDIUM OF THE VIRTUES OF MOST HOLY MARY.

(ABRIDGED PRINCIPALLY FROM DE PONTE.)

"He who created her in the Holy Ghost, saw and numbered and measured." Her purity was more than angelical. "Holy and Immaculate Virginity," sings the Church, of Mary, "I know not with what praises I may extol thee." "As the Ark of the Testament was made of the wood sethim, a wood incorruptible, and was gilded with most pure gold within and without, even so this Virgin adorned her incorruptible chastity with most pure virtues, as well with those which perfected the body in exterior works, as those which perfected the spirit in interior. First, rare Modesty in all the exterior motions of the body, with a certain celestial composure in her countenance, in her gait, and in her manner of speaking, insomuch that the exterior comportment of her body was a model of the inward sanctity

of her soul; and by her outward carriage might well be known the beauty of the interior building, in which, as it were, rays of the Divinity shone most marvellously. The second was admirable *Silence*, full of wisdom and discretion, speaking only when it was needful, and that in very few words, and with a very humble voice, as it appears by what is related of her in the Gospel. And on this account her lips are compared to a "scarlet lace," and her "speech sweet,"* giving to understand that she was very sparing in her words, but yet with tokens and signs of singular charity. The third was singular *Temperance* and Abstinence. After the Ascension of her son, she accomplished that which He said: "Can the children of the bridegroom mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast." She therefore fasted very rigorously, but especially when she petitioned anything of Almighty God for the good of the universal Church, joining fasting and penance with prayer, as she related afterwards to St. Elizabeth. The fourth was admirable Watching. Her body sleeping, her soul watched, according to that of the Canticles, "I sleep, and my heart watcheth."† Add to this her diligence in exterior works. "How shall I recount," says St. Ambrose, "the small refection of the

* Cant. iv. 3. † Cant. v. 2.

Virgin Mary, and her great labor and occupation. Sometimes she passed whole days without food, receiving daily the Blessed Sacrament from the hands of St. John, her faithful guardian, at whose Mass she assisted. Last of all, her heart intent on God, "she sought as judge and witness of her conscience, not men, but Almighty God,"* whose glory, as she always regarded it, so she always wished it, and, as far as in her lay, procured it. She frequented very often the places in which her Son wrought the mysteries of our redemption; she visited the Garden of Gethsemane, the mount of Calvary, the holy sepulchre, and the mount of Olivet, whence he ascended up to Heaven, and the sacred chamber in which the Holy Ghost descended, and first ordained the most Holy Sacrament of the altar. All these visits she made with great reverence and devotion, and with very high contemplation of the mysteries which were wrought in them, receiving new illustrations concerning them.

The Blessed Virgin Mary prayed most instantly in every place and in every time, and that with the greatest continuation that ever pure creature prayed, and as we have said, even when she slept, frequently thought on Almighty God, who visited her with visions no less delightful than those of Jacob, when sleeping he saw the Kingdom of God, in figure of that ladder, which,

* St. Ambrose.

standing upon the earth, touched heaven.* And generally in her contemplation, she received extraordinary favors, far greater than all the saints of the New and Old Testaments ever received. Almighty God appeared often to her, as He did to Moses, speaking with her, not by figures, nor in dreams, but mouth to mouth, and face to face, with the greatest clearness that is compatible with this mortal life. She was rapt, like St. Paul, even to the third heaven, and entered into Paradise itself, where she heard the secrets of God, which it is not lawful to utter to men. She was elevated in spirit like St. John the Evangelist, to see the things that were to come, and that with greater light than he. She saw several times the heaven open, as did St. Stephen, and her Son sitting upon the right hand of the Father. Finally, such and so great were her delights, that the angels admiring her, said: "Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?"

As regards the most Blessed Sacrament, our Blessed Lady went to communion every day with great devotion, receiving her Son in that mystery of love, to unite herself with Him daily anew, and delighting herself to see Him and enjoy Him in it, till she might come to see Him in His glory. In every communion she received such augmentation of grace, by reason of her most ex-

* Genesis xxviii. 12.

cellent disposition, as it is impossible to declare in words. Oftentimes, also, Christ Our Lord showed Himself to her in the same form, which then He had, and as He has done since to many others of His servants.

Thus every day she renewed that first joy which she felt in the Incarnation, receiving sacramentally into her breast Him whom then she received into her bowels; and as the Virgin, our Lady thus entered every day into the wine cellars of her Son, so she *burned in desire to exercise accordingly all the acts and works af charity;* whence arose in her a most inflamed zeal for the glory of God, and salvation of souls, but perfectly ordered; wherein we may all imitate her.

First, she vehemently *desired the salvation of all men*, which she solicited by prayers, and by all means she possibly could, now praying for the preachers of the Gospel, that God would give them efficacy in their words, and for sinners themselves, that God would vouchsafe to touch their hearts. And it may be believed that by her prayers, at the first and second sermon of St. Peter, so many thousands of men were converted. As also St. Paul, for whom she prayed no less than St. Stephen did. She likewise prayed for the martyrs, that God would give them constancy and victory. And holding her hands lifted up to Almighty God, much better than Moses did, when the people

of Israel overcame, how should not they overcome for whom she prayed ?*

Second, She likewise assisted souls with the rare example of her life, which was indeed a dumb preacher, but most effectual to provoke and move to all virtue, for there shone in her a certain divinity so great, that as St. Dionysius said of her, unless faith corrected the understanding, all would take her for God, as her Blessed Son was.†

Third, She assisted *with her words*, instructing the apostles in the mysteries of faith, which she knew with more particularity, and with greater light of heaven than they, comforting and encouraging the faithful who had recourse to her, not only from Jerusalem, but from the furthest parts of all the world. For as St. Ignatius, martyr, said, all desired to see her as a miracle of celestial sanctity.‡

Fourth, But her charity went yet further, for, as by the inspiration of Almighty God, she went from Nazareth into the mountains of Judea to visit Elizabeth, and by her means justified John the Baptist—even so by the same inspiration *she undertook now also certain journeys*. For she was at Ephesus, as the Fathers of the council of Ephesus affirm, and she went to Antioch,

* O sovereign Virgin, pray for this, thy servant, when he fights against his enemies, for, thou praying for me, I shall overcome by thee, and thine shall be the glory of my victory.

† Dionys. cap. 3. de Div. Nom.—De Ponte. ‡ Epist. i. 2.

as she herself promised St. Ignatius, and in like manner she went to other parts, to help and comfort the faithful who desired to see her, and to strengthen them in the faith, as also to spread it among the Gentiles. For although she was a great lover of quiet and recollection, yet charity forced her to issue forth (as is said in the Book of Canticles,) to visit the vineyards of the Church, and to see if they flourished, and whether the flowers of the new Christians produced the fruit of good works.*

Fifth, Finally, at this time, and on this account, as the same St. Ignatius relates, *she endured great murmurings and persecutions from the Scribes and Pharisees*, and from all those who abhorred and persecuted her Blessed Son; in which persecutions she showed herself very patient and joyful, rejoicing to suffer some contempt for the name and honor of her Son; and with this her marvelous example of patience, she greatly encouraged those who were persecuted, that they should endure them with the like patience. But her soul was greatly afflicted at the fall of certain feeble souls; for with more reason than St. Paul she might say: "Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is scandalized and I am not on fire?" and that of the Psalm, "The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up," and all my inward parts, as it did those of her Son, when he beheld the sins of

* Cant. vii. 12.

those that profaned it. But all this moved her to pray with greater fervor, and to procure with greater solicitude the salvation of souls, to His glory who created and redeemed them.

Behold, kind reader, I have transcribed for you one whole chapter from Father De Ponte, a more elegant, true, and concise compendium of the life and virtues of our most Blessed Lady than I could attempt to offer myself. For this also you too will thank me, since it will enable you to make several beautiful meditations on one, of whom the more you know the happier you will be, all of whose works were as an army of virtues, terrible to the devils, and pleasing to the elect of God, whose protection the Blessed Virgin Mary is.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

PORTRAIT OF MARY IMMACULATE.

Omnis gloria ejus filiæ regis ab intus. "All the glory of the King's daughter from within, in golden borders clothed round about with variety."* So says the royal Prophet, in a Psalm, the most of which is descriptive of this beautiful daughter of the King of Heaven. But that she was surpassingly lovely outwardly too, there

* Ps. xliv.

can be no shadow of doubt. The Canticle of Canticles would assure us of this had we no other evidence. *I am black but beautiful; O daughters of Jerusalem—do not consider me that the sun has altered my color.** Whereupon Cornelius a Lapide deduces authorities to prove that our Blessed Lady was of a somewhat dark complexion, and at the same time exceedingly beautiful.

So we would imagine too, from the picture supposed to have been painted by St. Luke, and now preserved in the Church of St. Mary Major at Rome. It is done on two panels of wood, which have become slightly disjointed by time. The Mother, exceedingly lovely, has a blue vail thrown lightly over her head. The child sits in her lap, having a book in one hand, and the other raised in the act of blessing. But Nicephorous, a Christian writer of an early age, has afforded us a description of the personal appearance of the Mother of God, too valuable to be passed over in silence. Here are his words: "The Blessed Virgin was of middling stature, yet some say that she was rather tall than otherwise. Her face was slightly oval, resembling in color the ripe ear of wheat. Her hair was fair, her eyebrows black and gracefully arched, her eyes bright, the pupil hazel, her nose rather long, her lips ruddy and full of sweet words, her hands and fingers long and delicate. Modest and grave in all things, she seldom spoke; in-

* Cantic. i. 4.

deed, only when compelled by necessity. She always readily listened to others with respect and deference. Far removed from all pride and luxuriousness, simple and full of humility, she reproved with becoming freedom, without laughter, without agitation, and above all without anger. She wore garments that had not borrowed false colors from art. Her head was habitually veiled, and, to comprise all in brief, a divine grace shone in all her actions."

Truly an admirable description of our Blessed Lady, and worthy of being committed to memory by every Catholic child. No less interesting the commentary of the Abbot Rupert on certain passages in the Book of Canticles, where He who created her in the Holy Ghost, and saw and numbered and measured this, His own beautiful creation, and pronounced it not only good but surpassing, praises her eyes, her hair, her teeth, her lips, her cheeks, her neck, and her breasts. Now listen to the Abbot: "In Mary's eyes, we behold simplicity; in her hair, purity of thought; in her teeth, innocence; in her lips, doctrine; in her cheeks, modesty; in her neck, humility; in her breasts, wonderful fruitfulness united to virginity."

As regards relics of our Blessed Lady, suffice it to say that there can be no doubt but that portions of her hair have been preserved, and Baronius relates that Pope Calixtus enclosed some of it in the altar which

he consecrated in honor of St. Agnes. With respect to her girdle and veil there is more room for question, though small portions of the latter are undoubtedly in existence, and Baronius confirms this belief, declaring that Pope Calixtus placed in the altar of St. Agnes both the hair and the veil of our Blessed Lady.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

MARY IMMACULATE IS NOW AND FOREVER QUEEN OF HEAVEN.

"I go to prepare a place for you;" words addressed by our Lord to His disciples on the eve of His triumphant Ascension, apply with yet greater force to His ever Virgin Mother. "Why did Christ," says Abbot Guerric, "precede His mother into the abode of glory, if not to prepare her an abode, and thus raise her in the most splendid and wonderful manner." And in his first sermon on the Assumption, he even puts these words into the mouth of our Lord: "To honor my Father, I descended to earth, to honor my Mother, I went back again to heaven." *Elevata est magnificentia tua super cœlos.* "Thy magnificence, O God, is exalted above the heavens,"* and the magnificence of God is

* Ps. viii.

the Virgin Mary. God has prepared His throne in heaven, and she is that throne of God adorned with royal magnificence. Thither countless *Ave Marias* ascend from every corner of this world of misery, and of an *Ave Maria* said as it should be, who shall begin to tell the efficacy? Listen to St. Gertrude.* "She was divinely instructed that as often as the angelic salutation is devoutly recited by the faithful on earth, three efficacious streamlets proceed from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, most sweetly penetrating the Blessed Virgin's heart. Then from her heart again with efficacious impetuosity they seek their fountains, and break at the foot of God's throne, as a sunny wave breaks upon a rock, leaving her most powerful after the Father, most wise after the Son, and most benignant after the Holy Spirit. These streams, while the *Ave Maria* is being said, flow around the Blessed Virgin superabundantly, and with potent impetus, and on the other hand flow back again upon her most holy heart.

"So with marvelous delectation, they seek their fountain first, and then redounding back, bright drops of joy, and bliss, and eternal salvation are sprinkled over all the persons of the saints and angels; nay, more, over those who on earth are then commemorating that same salutation, whereby is renewed in every one all the good

* Rev. l. iv. c. 12

which he has ever, up to this time, received through the most salutary Incarnation."

Behold, dear reader, the power of a devout Hail Mary! It goes to her heart. It is heard; it is answered. From the prisoner's cell, from the damp cellar, and the dreary garret, in city and town, on land and on sea, Mary is invoked, and the words of St. Anselm are realized: "As it is necessary, O Blessed Virgin, that he who loseth thy favor should, with it, lose his eternal salvation, so it is impossible that any in thy favor should perish:" and of St. Bonaventure: "The grace of God will sanctify that heart which worthily serveth thee." And why? Mary is Queen of Heaven. What God does by His power, she does by her prayer. The experience of all Christian ages attests it, and some of this experience it will be my pleasing duty to lay before you in succeeding chapters, in a series of examples. "Let us, therefore, have the fear of God before our eyes in all we do, soliciting also the intercession of the ever unspotted Virgin Mary, our Lady, and Mother of God, and of all the angels and saints."*

* Council of Nice, Act 6.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

HOW OUR BLESSED LADY, YET ALIVE, APPEARED TO ST. JAMES IN SPAIN.*

St. James the Greater was the first of our Lord's apostles who had the honor to suffer martyrdom. When his mother asked for him and his brother John the privilege to sit, the one on His right hand and the other on His left hand in His kingdom, our Lord had asked them whether they could drink of His chalice, and being answered in the affirmative, said to them both: "My chalice, indeed, you shall drink; but to sit on my right or left hand, is not mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by my Father." Both brothers afterwards suffered martyrdom, and St. James was the first to drink lovingly that part of the chalice of our Lord's passion. Already St. Stephen was dead, and devout men had cared for his burial. While the stones fell thick and heavy like hail, and his soul cleaved to

* Abridged from Mrs. Hope's "Early Martyrs."

God, for whom his flesh was stoned, the Blessed Virgin knelt in prayer beside the brook Cedron. Stephen, strengthened by her prayer, prayed for his persecutors, obtained the conversion of Saul, saw the heavens opened above him, and went to receive the crown that the Queen of Martyrs had supplicated for him. Whether he had invoked her or not is not written, but Mary sometimes prays even for those who do not invoke her. But one thing is certain : she loved very much all the disciples of our Lord, and during all their lives assisted them by her counsel and by her prayers, no less than at the hour of their death. After the death of St. Stephen, persecution fell on the Christians, and St. James left Jerusalem and preached in Samaria. He afterwards traveled through different countries, and at length arrived in Spain. Because he was the first to preach the Gospel in Spain, he has been always venerated by the Spaniards as their patron saint. The very name *Compostella* is abbreviated from certain Spanish words signifying *St. James the Apostle.* While he was in Spain he is said to have had a beautiful vision. He was living in the city of Saragossa, and one night, after a long day's preaching he went out to refresh himself by praying near the river Ebro, on which the city stands. While he was praying he saw our Blessed Lady standing before him on a jasper pillar, and all round her were multitudes of angels shining gloriously,

and singing the sweetest hymns he had ever heard. St. James wondered how our Lady could be there, because he knew that she was still alive, and was living at Jerusalem ; but seeing that it was really she, he bowed down before her. Then she said to him : "Build a church in this place in my name, for I know that this part of Spain will be particularly devout to me, and from this moment I take it under my protection ;" and as soon as she had spoken these words, she and all the angels vanished. The apostle now perceived that it was a vision that he had seen, and that our Lady had been brought from Jerusalem by the angels for the purpose of telling him to build a church there in her honor. So he lost no time in obeying her ; for he built on the very spot on which she had stood a chapel, which he called the Chapel of our Lady of the Pillar ; and to the present day a chapel with this name stands on the same spot, and is held in great veneration throughout Spain.*

* As regards the devotion of the early Christians to the Blessed Virgin, St. Gregory Nazianzen mentions that St. Justina, a youthful virgin who suffered martyrdom in the third century, invoked the aid of Mary against the sorceries and enchantments of a magician.—*Gregory Nazianzen, Sermon* xviii. Baronius states that Pope Calixtus I, in the year 224, erected in the most populous quarter of pagan Rome a little chapel, and that this chapel was called "Our Lady beyond the Tiber."—*Orsini.* Why so few documents? "The early Christians, devoting themselves exclusively to prayer, preaching, and martyrdom, wrote but little."

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

HOW THE BLESSED VIRGIN DISSIPATED PESTILENCE FROM ROME IN THE FIFTH CENTURY.

About the year 590 Rome was visited by a terrible pestilence, the plague: *Propter peccata veniunt adversa*, St. Philip Neri used to say. Wars, famine, and pestilence are the punishments of sin. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. God is not mōcked. What things a man sows those also shall he reap. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. *Deus judicium tuum regi da.* "Give, O God, thy judgment to the King, and thy justice to the King's Son." Thus God has divided His kingdom, and has reserved Justice to Himself. But to whom has He committed His Mercy? To her who sits on His Son's right hand, praying unceasingly for sinners. "Blessed be the Lord God, who has shown His great mercy to me in a fortified city."* Has not Mary become a city of refuge for sinners, more secure than any one of the

* Ps. xxx.

five or all together were of old? Is she not the city of God St. John saw coming down out of Heaven, that city of God of whom such glorious things have been told, that the nations have never got tired of her praises?* Yes, the people of God, when they are in trouble, have learned long ago to fly to Mary; nor did the Christians of Rome forget her in the hour of their distress. St. Gregory the Great, at the time we are speaking of, filled the chair of the Prince of the Apostles; a Pontiff wise, learned, and devout to the Blessed Virgin. What did he do? Having ordered penitential exercises, he went in procession to the Church of St. Mary Major, took from thence the picture of our Lady painted by St. Luke, and amid the singing of litanies carried it devoutly through the city.

The Blessed Virgin showed herself a peace-maker with her offended Son. No longer could it be said as of old, "O Lord thou art angry, and there is no one that riseth up and taketh hold of thee."† The sick got well; the air became clear. Pestilence ceased its ravages, and as the procession passed the tomb of Adrian, an angel was seen on its summit to sheathe his sword, while an invisible choir made the air resound with that beautiful canticle we now sing at Vespers in Paschal time: *Regina cœli lætare alleluia.* "Rejoice, O Queen of Heaven," etc. Then St. Gregory added the

* Ps. xliv. † Isaias lxiv.

last verse, *Ora pro nobis Deum alleluia*,* and the Catholic Church, grateful for such signal favors, has made that anthem a part of the divine office. Remember, O Virgin Mother of God, standing in the presence of God, to ask good things for us, and to avert His indignation from us. *Per te pax cœlestis donata est.*† "By thee heavenly peace is given."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

OUR LADY GIVES TO ST. BERNARD, ST. FRANCIS, AND ST. DOMINIC, PROOFS OF HER LOVE.

It has been more than sufficiently shown that the Blessed Virgin, our Lady, reigns in heaven. That she reigns also on earth there are abundant facts to prove. "She is more than a Queen whom the King obeys. She reigneth still, as she reigned then, by willing only what He wills, and by His granting all that she wills."‡ Hence the history of the Church of God is interwoven with innumerable instances of the love and protection of the Mother of God, ever as ready to reward and encourage the devotion of the Catholic faithful to her, as charity.

* Pray God for us † St. Epiphanius.

‡ *Glory of Mary*, by Rev. J. A. Stolbert.

she was in the days of St. James the Apostle. The eleventh century gave to the Church of God a saint, said to have been miraculously nourished at her bosom, devoted to her in word and in work as few had been before. True to her motto, "I love them that love me," she must have loved St. Bernard.

It happened that this great servant of God fell sick, and one day his sufferings became so excessive "that no longer able to bear up against them, he called two of his brethren, and begged them to go to the church and ask some relief of God. The brethren, touched with compassion, prostrated themselves before the altar, and prayed with great abundance of tears. During this time Bernard had a vision, which ravished him with delight. The Virgin Mary, accompanied by St. Lawrence and St. Benedict, under whose invocation he had consecrated the two side altars of his church, appeared to the sick man. "The serenity of their faces," says William of St. Thierry, "seemed the expression of the perfect peace which surrounds them in heaven." They manifested themselves so distinctly to the servant of God, that he recognized them as soon as they entered his cell. The Virgin Mary, as well as the two saints, touched with their sacred hands the parts of Bernard's body where the pain was most acute, and, by this holy touch, he was immediately delivered from his

malady ; and the saliva, which till then had been flowing from his mouth, ceased at the same time."*

To her devout servant St. Francis, in the thirteenth century, our Blessed Lady showed herself no less benignant than to St. Bernard in the eleventh. There was a little church in the valley of Spoleto which he loved, where he laid the first foundations of his order, and known as St. Mary of the Angels. There he said he had first received the spirit of grace, there he often wept and prayed, and there he received a most signal indication of Almighty favor. It was the month of October, 1221. Francis was in his cell praying for the conversion of sinners, when an angel admonished him to repair to the church, where he found our Lord and the Immaculate Virgin and many angels in waiting. At first he was dazzled by the light, but recovering himself, heard from the lips of our Lord these words : " Francis, the zeal which you and your followers have for the salvation of souls is such, that it entitles you to solicit something in their favor for the glory of my name. Ask whatsoever thou wilt, either for my glory or the consolation of the faithful."

Then St. Francis made his request : " Although a miserable sinner, yet, Almighty Lord, grant, I beseech thee, a plenary indulgence to all who, having confessed their sins to a Priest, will then visit this church ; and

* Ratisbonne's Life of St. Bernard.

I beg the Blessed Virgin, thy Mother, the general advocate of human kind, to intercede that I may obtain this request." Our Lord granted his prayer, commanding him first to get it ratified by the Pope; and Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin afterwards appeared again to him to fix the day. This is the great Franciscan indulgence of Portiuncola, now celebrated throughout Christendom on the first and second day of August. See then the interest our Blessed Lady takes in the happiness of her dear faithful. St. Dominic was a contemporary of St. Francis, like him in every difficulty having recourse with childlike confidence to the Queen of Angels.* One day, just as he had begun to pray, he was wrapt in spirit before God. "He saw the Lord, with the Blessed Virgin on His right hand, clad in a cope of sapphire color. Looking round he saw before God religious men of every order, but none of his own. Thereupon he began to weep bitterly, and dared not approach the Lord or His Mother. Our Lady beckoned him to advance, but he had not courage to do so, until our Lord gave him a similar invitation;

* "The twelfth century did not finish as it had begun, and when at evening it sloped towards the horizon to set in eternity, the Church appeared to stoop along with it, her brow overcast with the weight of her futurity. .....Jesus Christ looked upon his hands and feet pierced for us, and from this look of love sprang two men, Dominic and Francis of Assisium. The histories of these two men, at once so similar and so unlike, should never be written asunder; but what God created in the same manner it is not for one pen to describe."—*Lacordaire, Life of St. Dominic.*

he then came forward and prostrated himself before them, weeping bitterly. The Lord told him to rise, and when he had done so, inquired, 'Why do you weep so bitterly?' He answered, 'I weep to see religious of every other order, but none of mine.' The Lord said to him, 'Do you wish to see your order?' He answered trembling, 'Yes, Lord.' The Lord laid His hand upon the shoulder of the Holy Virgin, and said to blessed Dominic, 'I have handed over your order to my Mother.' He then said, 'Do you absolutely wish to see your order?' Dominic replied, 'Yes, Lord.' At this moment the Blessed Virgin opened the cope with which she seemed to be clad, and it expanded before the eyes of the blessed Dominic so as to cover with its immensity the whole of the heavenly country, while he saw beneath it a multitude of his brethren. The blessed Dominic prostrated himself to return thanks to God, and Blessed Mary, his Mother, when the vision disappeared.

"He then came to himself, and rang the bell for matins. When matins were over he assembled the brethren in the chapter room, where he addressed them in a beautiful exhortation upon the love and reverence which they should feel for the Blessed Virgin, and amongst other things related the vision."*

"But this is not the life of the Blessed Virgin?"

* Lacordaire's Life of St. Dominic.

Ah! the Blessed Virgin still lives, and who shall tell the height or depth, or length or breadth of her charity, reaching even to the very end of the world.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

OUR LADY APPEARS TO ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary was born at Presbourg, in the year 1207, and from her cradle gave pledges of the sublime destiny for which God reserved her. Three years old, she expressed her compassion for the poor, and sought to alleviate their misery. A monk, blind from the age of four years, was suddenly cured by her touch, and exclaimed, "All Hungary rejoices in this child, for she has brought peace with her!" She was a contemporary of St. Francis of Assissium, and having endured great persecutions, two years before her death assumed the Franciscan habit. The Pope sent her the old mantle of her holy father St. Francis, which dying she bequeathed to one of her companions, with these words: "Heed not that it is patched, torn, and miserable—for it was the most precious treasure I ever possessed. I declare to thee, that whenever I asked any special favor from my beloved Jesus, and that I prayed

covered with this cloak, He granted my wishes, always with infinite mercy."

The Blessed Virgin and St. John the Evangelist used frequently appear to her and favor her with celestial communications. "One night while Elizabeth recited the 'Angelical Salutation,' she to whom this beauteous prayer is addressed appeared, and among other things said: 'I will teach thee all the prayers that I used to say whilst I was in the temple. Beyond all else, I used to beg of God that I might love Him, and hate my enemy. There is no virtue without this absolute love of God, by which alone the plenitude of grace descends into the soul; but, after entering there, it flows away again unless the soul hates its enemies—that is to say, vice and sin. He then who would preserve this grace should endeavor to make this love and this hatred operate in his heart. I wish that thou wouldst learn to do as I did. I arose every night, and prostrate before the altar I begged of God to teach me to observe all His commandments, and to grant me those graces most pleasing to Him. I supplicated Him to permit me to see the time wherein should live the Holy Virgin who was to bring forth His Son, that I might consecrate my whole being to serve and venerate her."

Elizabeth interrupted her to say, "O most sweet Lady, were you not already full of grace and virtue?"

But the Holy Virgin replied, "Be assured that I thought myself as guilty and as miserable as thou thinkest thyself; that was why I prayed to God to grant me this grace. The Lord," added the Blessed Queen, "did with me what the skillful musician does with his harp—disposing all its chords so as to produce the most harmonious sound. It was thus the Lord was pleased to adapt to His good pleasure my soul, my heart, my mind, and all my senses. Thus governed by His wisdom, I was often borne by the angels to God's presence, and then I experienced so much joy, and sweetness, and consolation, that this world was entirely banished from my memory. So familiar was I with God and His angels, that it seemed as if I lived always with this holy court. Then when it pleased the Almighty Father, I was again brought by the angels to the place where I had been praying. When I found myself again upon earth, and remembered where I had been, this thought so inflamed my soul with such a love of God, that I embraced the earth, the stones, the trees, and all created things, through affection for their Creator. I wished to be the servant of all the holy women who dwelt in the temple; I wished to be subject to all creatures through love for the Supreme Father. Thou shouldst do this also; but thou askest thyself always, *Why are such favors granted to me, who am so unworthy to receive them?* and then thou fallest into a kind of

despair and distrust of the goodness of God. Be careful not to speak thus any more, for it displeases God, who, like a good master, can confer his benefits on whom He pleases, and who, like a wise Father, knows what is best suited to each child. In fine," said her heavenly instructress in conclusion, "I have come to thee by a special favor; this night I am thine; ask what thou pleasest, I will answer all."

During the vigil of Christmas, Elizabeth begged of the Lord to grant her grace to love him with her whole heart; the Blessed among women appeared to her again, and asked, "Who is it that loves God? dost thou?" The humble Elizabeth dared not affirm that she did, and yet was unwilling to deny it. While she hesitated to answer, Mary continued: "Dost thou wish that I should tell thee who loved him? The blessed Bartholomew did, as likewise did St. John and Saint Laurence. Wouldst thou, like them, endure being flayed alive, or burned, for His sake?" Elizabeth remaining still silent, Mary resumed: "Indeed, I say unto thee, if thou will consent to be deprived of all that is dear, precious, and loveable to thee, and even of thine own will, I will obtain for thee the same reward that Bartholomew received, when his skin was flayed off. If thou endurest insults patiently, thou wilt be like unto Laurence, when he suffered martyrdom; if thou keepest silence when reproached and offended,

thou wilt merit grace, as John did, when the wicked sought to poison him ; and in all this, I will be near to instruct and fortify thee."

One day, when at meditation, as Elizabeth thought upon the prayers the Holy Virgin had told her she made in the temple, she asked herself, "Why did Mary seek for graces that never failed her?" The Queen of Heaven appeared, and answered her with gentle sweetness and familiarity : "I did," said she, "as a man who would wish to construct a fair fountain. He goes to the foot of a mountain, examines carefully whence springs the water ; he digs until he finds the source, and then directs the stream to the spot wherein he would have his fountain ; this place he constructs, so that the water must remain pure and fresh ; he surrounds his fountain with a wall, erects a pillar, and all around he makes canals, wherein the water may flow plentifully, for the comfort of all. Thus did I act—I went to the mountain, when I began to study the Holy Law. I found the source, when I learned that to love God with the whole heart was the origin of all good. I prepared the place when I conceived the desire of loving all that He loved. I willed that the water should be pure and clear when I resolved to fly and hate sin. I surrounded it with walls when I joined humility, patience and meekness to the fire of charity. I erected the pillar and formed the canals when I be-

came, as it were, an universal Refuge—for I am always ready to bring floods of grace and consolation from on High to those who invoke me for themselves, or others. I have revealed to thee," said she in conclusion, "my beloved daughter, all the prayers that I used, in order that, by my example, thou shouldst supplicate God, in all confidence and humility, for all thou requirest. Knowest thou why virtues are not equally given to all men? Because some know not how to ask them with such humility, nor preserve them with so much care as others; that is why God wishes that he who has less, should be aided by those who possess more. And I wish that thou shouldst pray fervently for thine own salvation and that of others."*

"These wonderful interviews over," adds Montalembert, "Elizabeth saw, one day, a tomb covered with flowers, out of which her sweet Consolatrix arose, and was borne to Heaven by myriads of celestial spirits, who conducted her to the arms of her divine Son. An angel came to explain to her this vision of the Assumption, which was granted as a favor, intended to enable her to endure her present sufferings, and also to foreshow the glory which God had in store for her, should she persevere to the end, faithful and docile to His divine will."

I leave the reader to judge whether matter such as

* Montalembert's Life of St. Elizabeth.

the above, be irrelevant or not to a Life of our Blessed Lady. Would not rather her holy life be still more incomplete than it is, without it?

CHAPTER XXX.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

APPARITIONS OF OUR LADY TO ST. TERESA.

THE mother of St. Teresa took care to show her little children the way of being devout to our Lady, and when the Saint was but six years old, this care of a good mother began to affect her. She says, "I had virtuous parents, and such as feared God."* Presently she adds, "I remember that when my mother died, I was not quite twelve years old. When I began to understand what a loss I had sustained, I was greatly afflicted, and I threw myself before an image of our Lady, beseeching her, with many tears, to be a mother to me. And though I performed this action in simplicity, yet I think I gained benefit from it, for I have clearly experienced the assistance of this sovereign Virgin, whenever I recommended myself to her; and, in a word, she has turned me altogether to her."

I need not inform the reader, that this same St.

* Life, written by herself. Chap. i.

Teresa became, in course of time, a distinguished member of the Order of our Lady of Mount Carmel, which she labored to reduce to its primitive strictness. Nor did the Queen of Heaven forget to testify to her the complacence she took in seeing St. Joseph honored.

"Being, one day, in a certain monastery belonging to the Order of the glorious St. Dominic, I was considering the many sins of my former life, (which I had confessed in that house,) and the events of my wicked way of living, when, suddenly there came so great a rapture upon me, that it took me almost out of myself. I sat down; and yet it seemed to me, I was not able either to hear Mass, or even to see the Elevation, for which I afterwards had some scruple. While I was in this state, I appeared to be clothed with a garment of great whiteness and brightness, and at first, I could not tell who clothed me; but afterwards, I saw our Lady on the right hand, and my father (St. Joseph,) on the left, who clothed me with this robe. I was then given to understand, that I was now cleansed from my sins. When I was thus clothed, and full of the greatest joy and glory, our Lady immediately took hold of me by the hands, and told me, 'That seeing me devoted to the glorious St. Joseph gave her much pleasure; that our Lord, and she herself, and St. Joseph, would be devoutly served in the monastery; that I should have no fear about this decree being changed, though the obe-

dience placed upon me might not be agreeable to my inclinations, because they themselves would protect us; that her Son had already promised He would remain with us.' As a proof that all her words would come true, she cast a very beautiful chain of gold around my neck, with a cross of great value attached to it. But this gold and these precious stones are so very different from those of this world, that no comparison whatever can be made between them, nor can we possibly imagine what their beauty was. Neither can our understanding know of what the garment was made, nor can it form any idea of its whiteness; for all the whiteness we see in this world is like *soot* in comparison. The beauty I saw in our Blessed Lady was beyond description, though I could not determine the form nor figure of any particular part. I could only discern the form of her countenance; she was clad in white, and surrounded with excessive splendor, yet this was sweet and not dazzling. I did not see the glorious St. Joseph so clearly, though I knew well he was present, as in those visions which are not seen, whereof I have already spoken. Our Lady seemed very young, and she remained with me only for a short time, but I enjoyed great pleasure and glory from the sight, *more* in my opinion than ever I had enjoyed before; and glad would I have been never to have been deprived of the vision. I thought I saw both of them ascend into

heaven, attended with a great multitude of angels ; in the mean time I was left quite alone, though so comforted, and transported, and recollected in prayer, that I remained for some time unable either to move or speak, for I was almost out of myself. I had great impulses to be, as it were, annihilated for God, and I experienced some of the effects thereof ; and the whole happened in such a way that I was never able (though I used great endeavors) to doubt but that the vision came from God. The Queen of Angels left me very full of comfort and peace by what she said to me."

"Another time I saw our Blessed Lady putting a very white garment on a Professor of Divinity belonging to the same Order (Dominican) of whom I have often spoken. She told me that for the service he had done her, in helping to erect this house, she gave him that mantle, as a sign that his soul should be preserved for the future in purity, and that he should never fall into mortal sin. I am confident it proved so ; for he died within a few years after, and his life and death were attended with such penance and sanctity, that there can remain no doubt of his salvation, as far as we are able to judge. A Friar, who was present at his death, assured me, that before he expired he told him how St. Thomas had been with him. He died with great joy, and with a desire to be free from this banishment.

Since that he has sometimes appeared to me in very great glory, and told me many things."*

CHAPTER XXXI.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

ST. PETER OF ALCANTARA.

HOW HE CONFIDED IN THE BLESSED VIRGIN—SHE APPEARS TO HIM.

St. Peter of Alcantara was a contemporary of St. Teresa in the sixteenth century. She had wonderful confidence in his prayer, Almighty God having disclosed to her that everything asked through his intercession would be granted, even while he was yet alive. His astounding penances are unsurpassed. Just after death he appeared to St. Teresa, who heard him utter these words: "O happy penance which has merited for me such and so great glory." In the year 1525 he was appointed warden of the Monastery of Our Lady of the Angels, three miles from Robredillo, in Spain, a frightful solitude. St. Francis had been there once, and predicted that a brilliant light should one day shine forth in that place. This was St. Peter of Alcantara, who strove to imitate in this retreat the seraphic spirit and the piety to the Mother of God by

* Life of St. Teresa. Translated by Rev. Canon Dalton.

which their holy patriarch St. Francis had so gloriously distinguished himself while in this monastery. Next to the Queen of Angels, St. Peter of Alcantara, like St. Edward the Confessor,* cultivated a singular devotion to St. John the Evangelist, and both she and St. John came to him when he was dying. "Having blessed all his Religious present and absent, in the name of the Holy Trinity and of St. Francis, and finally recommended himself to their prayers, he awaited death with immovable courage and great interior peace, which showed itself in the calmness and joyousness of his face. They began the *miserere*, to which he replied by often repeating, with abundance of tears, and as if he were the vilest of sinners, the verse, 'Wash me, O Lord, more and more from my sins.' The Psalm being finished, he remained for the space of a quarter of an hour in deep meditation; and at the same time the Blessed Virgin, St. John the Evangelist, and a multitude of angels and saints, descended into his room, to accompany his soul in triumph to heaven.

The Saint returning to himself, and seeing at one side of his bed the Mother of God, and at the other St. John, was animated with extraordinary fervor, and raising his eyes and heart to heaven, he saw the Most Holy Trinity, which at that moment blessed him with

* St. Edward the Confessor never refused any poor one who asked alms for the love of St. John the Evangelist.

its adorable presence. At this sight, no longer able to contain the inpetuosity of divine love, which beat with ravishing violence in his heart, he cried out, 'My children, do you not see that the Blessed Trinity, the glorious Virgin Mary, and St. John the Evangelist, are here?' And thus with his soul absorbed in God, he rose from his bed as if in perfect health and strength, and throwing himself on his knees, recited some prayers with a loud voice, and in particular the Psalm, 'I cried to the Lord with my voice; with my voice I made supplication to Him.'*

"At this moment all the assistants were filled with great devotion, seeing that the servant of God, without passing the agony or the terrors of death, was already in the enjoyment of the sweets of heaven. In fine, while thus kneeling and supported in the arms of the Religious, when he had finished the last verse of the Psalm, 'Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name; the just wait for me, until Thou reward me,' he considered the sweetness with which Our Lord and His Blessed Mother invited him to come and enjoy eternal beatitude. His joy burst forth in these words: 'I am rejoiced at what is said to me; we will go into the house of the Lord.' He spoke these words with such sweetness that you would have said an angel spoke. Shortly after, with a gentle sigh, he slept the sleep of

* St. Francis of Assissium expiring recited the same Psalm.

the just, and at the same moment the clock struck four as he himself had predicted, on Sunday, the 18th October, which is also the Feast of St. Luke, in the year of Our Lord 1562, at the age of 63."*

The above narrative reminds us of what St. Alphonsus Ligouri said: "Mary makes death sweet to her servants." The Feast of St. Peter of Alcantara is celebrated on the 19th of October.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

HOW ST. IGNATIUS AND ST. PHILIP NERI SHOWED THEMSELVES DEVOUT TO OUR LADY, AND HOW SHE FAVORED THEM WITH CELESTIAL APPARITIONS.

READER, I am still writing the Life of our dear Lady, but it is a part of her glorious and triumphant life, the life she leads as Queen of Angels and of men in that heavenly city where sorrow is no more, and the saints "joyful in their beds, rejoice in glory."† St. Philip Neri and St. Ignatius were both raised up by God to console His Church in the sixteenth century: both were witnesses to each other's sanctity, both were solidly

* Oratorian Life of St. Peter of Alcantara, edited by F. W. Faber.

† Psalm cxlix. 5. The word glory has been deified *clara notitia cum laude*: "Clear knowledge with praise."

devout to the Blessed Virgin. Let us recur to the conversion of the latter, just after the siege of Pampeluna. "When able to leave his bed, he began the custom of rising every night for prayer, and one night when he was more than usually inflamed with holy desires, he threw himself on his knees before an image of our Lady, and with burning words and abundant tears made an entire oblation of himself through her hands to her Divine Son, determining to cleave to Him amidst contempt and sufferings, trusting to God's grace and the intercession of His Blessed Mother for perseverance in his great resolve. While he was engaged in this act of devotion, suddenly the whole palace was shaken, and in the chamber of the Saint more particularly, the wall was rent and the glass of the windows broken to pieces, the effect of the rage of the devil, who perceived what Ignatius then was, and feared still more what he would afterwards become.

But the conversion of Ignatius was perfected by a vision which appeared to him on another night, when he was visited by the Virgin Mother of God with the infant Jesus in her arms. Our sweet Lady stood before him, at a little distance, with unspeakable goodness suffering him to gaze upon her, and, as it were, satiate himself with the view. From that time forward his heart was so transformed by the sight of her most heavenly beauty, that all which the world loves and prizes

became hateful and wearisome to him; and what is most wonderful, all impure images which had infested his imagination by reason of the freedom which he had in times past permitted to his senses, were chased away forever from his mind, so that he never afterwards felt the rebellion of the flesh. The better to remember the principal events of the Life of Christ and of the Saints, he wrote them out with great care and beauty in a quarto volume of three hundred pages, and from a feeling of reverence and piety he inscribed the actions and the words of Christ in a beautiful vermillion color, or else in gold, and those of our Lady in blue, and those of the Saints in various other colors." *

But what of St. Philip Neri? Would you know how he loved the Blessed Virgin? He called her *Mamma mia*, as little children call their mother. And has not our Lord proclaimed her our Mother, by a most solemn public act, from the throne of the Cross?

He visited her images in various churches, remaining before them a long while, giving vent and relief to the fullness of his devotion towards her. He often spent whole nights in his prayers, indulging in the sweetest colloquies with her. He recommended to repeat often the prayer, "Virgin Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus Christ, thy Son, for me, a sinner." He declared that he had received infinite favors from our Blessed

* Oratorian Life of St. Ignatius Loyala, edited by F. W. Faber.

Lady, and by her intercession been delivered from horrible temptations with which the devil tried to frighten him. In a word, like St. Bernardine of Sienna, he was enamored of her. His life contains wonderful instances of her protection.

"While they were building his church, Giovanni Antonio Lucci, who superintended the work, had left a piece of roof above a part of the old church, where there was an ancient picture of our Blessed Lady. He had done this in order that Mass might be said under it, and the Blessed Sacrament reserved. One morning the holy father sent for him in great haste, and ordered him to have the roof taken off immediately, because he had seen that it would have fallen that very night just passed, if the glorious Virgin had not held it up with her own hands. Giovanni Antonio immediately went with some workmen to execute the obedience, and found that the principal beam had started from the wall, and was apparently self-supported in the air."

Last of all, when St. Philip died, this powerful Mother did not forget him, but favored him with that wonderful apparition related in his life, which left him so full of sweetness and of devotion towards her that while he survived he was never tired of repeating, "O, my sons, be devoted to the Madonna."*

* One of his maxims ran thus: "Be devout to the Madonna, keep yourself from sin, and God will deliver you from your evils." It is true.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE MOTHER OF A MARTYR.

Beatus qui intelligit super egenum et pauperem. Words to be remembered. *Quia in die mala liberabit eum Dominus.** Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor, the Lord will deliver him in the evil day. They are the words of the Holy Ghost, and God is both most powerful and most faithful to his promises. *Qui timet Deum faciet bona.* He who fears God will do good works, and he who wishes to be delivered out of the hands of his enemies in the evil day will take thought when he has the opportunity to relieve distress, that what he does to one of those he does to Jesus Christ; nay more, he will seek opportunities to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, console the desolate. St. Martin,† yet unbaptized, divided his cloak with the shivering beggar, and the next night our Lord appeared to him covered with it. Works pleasing to God never

* Psalm xl. † Feast Nov. 11th.

go unrewarded. Either they are recompensed in this world or the next, or both together. But St. Philip Neri prayed that he might not get all his reward in *this world*, which would be a calamity. The mother of St. Thomas of Canterbury was one of those who, penetrated with light from on high, understood concerning the needy and the poor.* She had been a young Syrian lady, daughter of an emir. Gilbert Becket in his youth made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and falling into the hands of the Saracens, became her father's slave. Hearing him one day explain the Christian faith, and declare that he should with the greatest joy lay down his life for the love of God, if he was made worthy of such a happiness, she was so touched as to conceive then and there a desire to be a Catholic. Mr. Becket and companions presently made their escape in the night time, and got back safe to London, where she must needs follow him, though an only daughter; and being instructed in the faith, and baptized by the name of Maud, or Mathildes, was afterwards married to him by the Bishop of London in St. Paul's Church.

The much loved child of two such parents, St. Thomas of Canterbury, came into this world on the

* The poor are the feet of Jesus Christ. *Fortasse pedes Domini indigent in terra.* Perhaps the feet of Jesus Christ are in want on earth; help them, and you do what Mary Magdalen did, wipe them with your hair, i. e., bestow on them *all* that is superfluous to you. Ah! how much, like hair, is really superfluous to us!

21st of December, in the year of our Lord 1117. From his infancy Maud taught her little son to fear God, and inspired him with a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin. "From his cradle," says Dr. Rock,* "was St. Thomas taught to love the Virgin, by his own mother, who used, in her hallowed playfulness of heart, to put her boy while he was yet a child into a scale, and bestow his weight in food, clothing, and money on the poor, that she might thereby win for her darling the prayers and the protection of this Blessed Mary." O, holy simplicity, worthy of a St. Gertrude, that drew down on mother and son the everlasting love of the Queen of Angels! Maud's solicitude for her little boy was remembered in heaven. Ever penetrated with the devotion to the Mother of God that his lovely mother had instilled into him, he grew up to be a man, presently became an Archbishop, and because he loved justice and hated iniquity, the torment of a jealous king; by whose order, just as he entoned *Deus in adjutorium* at the beginning of Vespers, his skull was clove in twain, and the whole sanctuary besmeared with his holy martyr's blood. A sudden death but not an unforeseen one, for our Lady had not forgotten Maud and the little boy she used to weigh in the scales, nor the prayers of the poor ones whom she assisted. *In die mala liberabit eum Dominus.* Listen now to St. Alphonsus Ligouri, who will tell us

* Church of our Fathers, vol. iii., page 297.

something of the forewarning St. Thomas received. I give his own words, from the Glories of Mary: "St. Thomas of Canterbury, when he was a young man, found himself one day in conversation with several other youths, each of whom boasted of some foolish love affair. The holy youth declared that he too loved a great lady, and was beloved by her, meaning the most Holy Virgin. Afterwards he felt some remorse at having made this boast; but behold, Mary appeared to him in his trouble, and with a gracious sweetness said to him: 'Thomas, what do you fear? You had reason to say that you loved me, and that you are beloved by me; assure your companions of this, and as a pledge of the love I bear you, show them this gift that I make you.' The gift was a small box, containing a chasuble, of a blood red color, as a sign that Mary, for the love she bore him, had obtained for him the grace to be a priest and a martyr, which indeed happened, for he was first made priest and afterwards Bishop of Canterbury, in England, where he was at one time persecuted by the King, and fled to the Cistercian monastery at Pontignac, in France. While he was there, wishing one day to mend his hair-cloth shirt that he usually wore, which was ripped, and not being able to do it well, his beloved Queen appeared to him, with especial kindness took the haircloth from his hand, and repaired it as it

should be done. After this he returned to Canterbury, and died a martyr."

The feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury is celebrated on the 29th of December, and on that day the Church prays that "All who implore his help may obtain the salutary effect of their petitions."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

ST. MARY MAGDALENE OF PAZZI, IN AN ECSTACY SAYS WONDERFUL THINGS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

St. Mary Magdalene, of Pazzi, whose baptismal name was Caterina, while yet only ten years old, was wont to assemble ten or twelve of the little villagers, to instruct them in the principles of the holy faith. On the 25th of March, 1576, she made her first communion in Florence. Long before this, on the day that her mother went to communion, the little girl would walk round her, sit by her side, and on her dress, never going from her during the day. In surprise her mother asked her why she did so, when she replied: "My mother, you breathe of Jesus, you smell of Jesus;" for she inhaled the perfume of the Divine Sacrament which her mother had that morning received. This was the Saint

who became famous for those wonderful ecstacies which astonished all who heard of them.

The Queen of Heaven often appeared to her encircled by splendor and glory, and instructed her how to make herself acceptable to Jesus crucified. When asked to pray for any sinner, she said: "I pray for others, God grant I may not be worse than they." Being dreadfully assailed by several temptations for two years, she had recourse to the aid of the Blessed Virgin, who, appearing to her on the 15th of April, 1587, while she was locked in a room apart, and praying, covered her with a white veil, telling her that in future she should never know the least thought or feeling contrary to purity: and so it came to pass; for from that time she felt herself insensible as a stone to all such temptations. Her body yielded so sweet and unusual an odor of purity, sweeter far than the odor of flowers, that those who inhaled it did not know to what to compare it, and it seemed to them to excite to purity and the desire of being with God. So gracious were her looks, that merely by looking on her afflicted spirits were consoled, and sad hearts made glad. What, then, must it not have been to see and converse with our Blessed Lady, as did St. Dionysius and others?

On the 12th of May, 1585, she was wrapped in spirit for forty hours, in remembrance of the forty hours during which the most holy humanity of Christ remained

in the sepulchre, and uttered wonderful things about the burial of Christ and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. "Thou, O Mary, wert a temple, and thy Son was a temple. Thou didst behold thyself in Him, and Him in thy neighbor. Thou wert the lovely temple in which was made the worthy offering, for thou wert not only sanctified but conceived Immaculate. I saw the throne of God high and elevated, and Mary the Mother of Jesus sitting on it, encircled by various lilies, and upborne by four angels. What glory can be rendered to Mary for so high a vocation given her by the Word, and for her firm and steadfast faith!" Then concerning the Assumption. She saw the angels rejoice in festive dance around the place where the body of the Virgin reposed, which might be called another paradise, since in her, that is, in her holy body, God Himself had reposed. Presently the Saint uttered these words: "Heaven did not appear finished without Mary, for it wanted its ornament. The saints were not perfectly glorified while Mary was wanting to paradise, since they have received from her the fruit of their glorification. And what more? God Himself seemed not to enjoy His glory, being by nature so disposed to communicate Himself, while there was no creature in Paradise sufficiently pure to be capable of receiving His glory. O, the humanity of the Word! Yes, He was there; but He was God and man, and by

consequence glorious in Himself. And therefore the Eternal Father, fixing His eyes on Mary, delighted in her great purity, which had attracted the Word to herself, and inclosed Him in her little womb.....Behold, Mary is already elevated above the clouds, and is seen no more; a little of her splendor is alone visible." Here she offered many creatures to the Most Holy Virgin, and was aroused from her rapture.

St. Mary Magdalene, of Pazzi, expired May 25th, 1607. One of her last sentiments was the following: "In Paradise we cannot suffer for the love of God as we can in this life; therefore I do not wish to die."*

"I ask not God to relieve my sufferings, I ask for patience and strength to bear them."

CHAPTER XXXV.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI—THE BLESSED VIRGIN APPEARS TO HIM WHILE HE IS PREACHING.

St. Alphonsus Maria Liguori, the author of the "Glories of Mary," was born at Marianella, near Naples, on the feast of Saints Cosmas and Damian, September 27th, 1696. Baptized on the feast of St. Michael

* Words uttered in 1604.

the Archangel, from the hour of his birth he was placed in a special manner under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, that in all his necessities he might find in her an advocate and Mother. Saint Francis Jerome, of the Society of Jesus, foretold to Don Joseph and Donna Anna the future sanctity of the little Alphonsus. He took him from the arms of his mother, and blessing him, he said, "This little child will live to a great age, even until ninety years. He will be a Bishop, and will perform great things for Jesus Christ." A boy, he delighted in sketching pictures of Jesus crucified, of the Blessed Virgin, and of St. Joseph. While yet a young lawyer, he had a great attachment for the priests of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri, in Naples, and was at one time under a vow to join them, and this devotion to St. Philip Neri still exists in the congregation he afterwards established.

One of his father's slaves, moved by the example of Alphonsus, expressed an inclination to be a Christian, and Alphonsus began to instruct him. In the mean time, this slave fell sick, and was sent to the hospital. One evening, being very weary, he sent in haste for his young master, who came, accompanied by Father Mastrilla. As soon as they got there, he begged to be baptized, saying, "I have seen the Madonna, St. Joseph, and St. Joachim, and they have told me I must be baptized now, because they would have me in Paradise."

The Priest replied that his illness was not dangerous, and besides, he was not sufficiently instructed to receive baptism. "Let your reverence interrogate me," replied the slave, "for I am prepared to answer all your questions." And indeed he replied with the utmost precision and accuracy to every question. He was baptized, and then bid to repose a little after the fatigue. "This is not a time to rest," he said, "for I must go immediately to Paradise." They all laughed at his reply, for his sickness was not a dangerous one; but in about half an hour this poor slave, his countenance radiant with joy, surrendered his poor soul into the hands of his Creator. He was the only one among many Mahometan slaves who had ever become Christian, notwithstanding the numerous attempts that were made to convert them.*

At this time Alphonsus was in his twentieth year. Shortly after this an occurrence in his legal career was the occasion on which God enlightened him to see that everything except to love God is vain. He became a Priest; he founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, and as St. Francis Jerome predicted, he died a Bishop. The mission fulfilled by St. Alphonsus and his congregation is best expressed in the introit read at Mass on his Feast, August 2d: "The spirit of

* Life of St. Alphonsus, edited by Rev. F. W. Faber.

the Lord is upon me; wherefore he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the contrite of heart." They were the apostles of the poor and the neglected, and the Blessed Virgin raised them up to do her own work for those whom, if all others forgot, she did not. It is the glory of the Catholic Church. The poor we have always with us, and always will have, and God will ever raise up in the Church of the Saints St. Francises and St. Alphonsuses to take care of them.

On more than one occasion the Blessed Virgin testified her love for St. Alphonsus, by working extraordinary conversions through his means. A certain young man arose during the night to engage in a sinful transaction. He had a repugnance, however, to commit a sin with the scapular about his neck. He took it off to place it in a hole in the wall, but when he extended his hand, he felt himself drawn back, and fled from the spot in terror. The following night the Blessed Virgin, willing to recompense the slight homage paid to her scapular, appeared to him in a dream. "Miserable being, thou hadst respect for my scapular, and thou hadst no horror of offending my Son! To-morrow the Father Alphonsus will come here to give a mission; go, confess to him, and amend thy life." Alphonsus came on the morrow. "So, then," said he, "our good Mother has sent you to me." He reconciled

the young man with God,* and from that time he led a good life.

In the year 1750, St. Alphonsus finished and published the "Glories of Mary." Musatori had attempted to combat the proposition that "all the benefits of God pass through the hands of Mary." St. Alphonsus made it clear that there is the mediation of justice by merit, which is that of Jesus Christ, and the mediation of grace by prayer, which is that of the Blessed Virgin; that if Jesus Christ is the only Mediator of justice, who obtains salvation for us by His merits, Mary is the mediatrix of grace, because she prays and obtains all by the merits of Jesus Christ. Alphonsus dedicated the "Glories of Mary" to Jesus Christ. "I know not," he says, "to whom I can better dedicate this work than to Thee, who so ardently desirest the glory of Thy holy Mother. Recompense me by kindling in my heart the love which I desire to communicate to the hearts of all who read this book."

And now of the Apparition of Our Lady, which the Redemptorists have the privilege to celebrate with a proper Mass and office on the 11th of April. The event was as follows, and shows that Mary Immaculate "loves them that love her;" and more than that, sometimes gives them sensible proofs of her love. The

* "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and has given to us (priests) the ministry of this reconciliation."—St. Paul.

saint had just finished a mission at the town of Amalfi amid the tears and penance of its inhabitants, who turned themselves to God like another Ninive. Addressing them one day on devotion to the Blessed Virgin, he suddenly stopped short and exclaimed, "Ah! you do not pray to her as you ought; I shall address her for you." He then turned towards a statue of the Blessed Virgin, and proceeding in a strain of enraptured eloquence, was observed by the congregation to rise some feet above the ground; while, at the same time, the statue of the Blessed Virgin, all radiant, beamed upon the extatic Alphonsus, and the entire multitude exclaimed, "A miracle! a miracle!" This lasted for some time, when, returning to himself, he assured the congregation that it had found favor with the Blessed Virgin.*

* Through the kindness of a Rev. Father Redemptorist, to whom I am ever indebted for many favors, I have in my possession an engraving of this occurrence, which, either as an engraving or photograph, I hope may appear in some future edition of the present work.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

"MARY MAKES DEATH SWEET TO HER SERVANTS."

THE words which stand at the head of this chapter came from the pen of St. Alphonsus, are found in the "Glories of Mary," and were exemplified in his own last moments. "Last of all, one must die."* Happy the man whom Our Lady then helps, as she did the Saint, who in life had loved her. His eighty-third year found St. Alphonsus very feeble and bent down with age, yet always recommending devotion to Our Lady to all who came to see him. "Be devout to the Blessed Virgin," said he to them; "he who is devoted to her will be saved." And to young men, "Love the Blessed Virgin much, for she is the Mother of perseverance, and he who loves Jesus Christ and the Holy Virgin Mary will become a Saint."

"One day," says Tanoja, "when he was animating us to confidence in the protection of Mary, he said, 'In

* St. Philip Neri.

my youth I also did wild things, but the Blessed Virgin called me to religion. I am wholly indebted for it to my Mother, for she called me, and she has supported me until now.' " One evening, when he was very sick, he exclaimed, "I cast myself into the arms of Jesus Christ, I die without uneasiness, and I believe that I shall be saved by the merits of Jesus Christ and of my Mother Mary! Yes; I hope to go and thank them in Paradise." These words were often on his lips: "Be devout towards the Most Holy Virgin Mary and to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament."

When dying, he said to those who stood near, "Pray to the Madonna for me." "Yes," replied Father Magoldi, "we will pray to Jesus Christ and to the Madonna for you—to that beautiful Madonna which is at St. Clare—do you remember it?" "Where?" replied the saint; and the Father repeated, "The Madonna at St. Clare—do you not remember it?" "Yes," he replied, quite joyously.

St. Alphonsus Maria Liguori died on the 1st of August, 1787, just as the bell rang *Angelus*, holding a picture of the Blessed Virgin in his hands. Twice he seemed to have a mysterious interview with the Blessed Virgin. She had not forgotten his repeated prayers. "Pardon my boldness, O my Queen, and come yourself to console me before I expire! When I am in the last struggles of death, O Mary, my hope, do not abandon

me! O my Queen, pardon my temerity; come yourself, then, and console me by your presence! You have conferred this favor on many others, and I also long for it. If my boldness is great, your goodness is still greater, and seeks out those who are the most unworthy, in order to console them." *

Do not imagine, dear reader, that the devil let him alone. He had horrible temptations against faith, and to despair, but Mary brought him off victorious. Presently he became worse, but his peace and serenity were unalterable. "At about six o'clock," † says Tanoja, "when he was being attended by two of our Fathers, and held a picture of the Blessed Virgin in his hand, his face suddenly became inflamed and resplendent, and a sweet smile also overspread his lips." Masses were said for him on the following morning, and about 11 o'clock he died in the peace of Jesus Christ, a most eminent servant of Our Blessed Lady, whom she did not forget then, when most of all he had entreated her to remember him. "Mary makes death sweet to her servants." *Filioli hæc tota ratio spei mei.*

* "The Glories of Mary." † The evening before he died.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

TO OUR LADY OF PERSEVERANCE.

Let us not presume. Stars have fallen from heaven. Our eternity of weal or woe depends on a moment. Shall we in that moment go to meet our God in the kiss of peace? St. Paul feared for himself, lest after all the truth he had uttered he himself should become reprobate. Pride can undo us in a moment, perhaps in the very moment when we have the most need to be humble. The Kingdom of God consists not in talk, but in virtue. It is virtue we want. May God grant it to us. Did I presume too much to treat of Our Lady, who by human intelligences is often best venerated by silence? If so, she will regard me with compassion.*

* Quamvis sciam quod Mariam,
Nemo digne prædicet;
Tamen vanus et insanus,
Quisquis illam reticet.

Hymn of St. Casimir.

Perhaps for me, too, she will obtain grace and perseverance. In every trial may our Lady of Perseverance befriend us, that neither tribulation, nor distress, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor danger, nor persecution, nor the sword, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, may be ever able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord.*

She can do all this for us. She has done it for others. Perhaps now some such favor she is asking for us. "O, Lord, give me what the Most Holy Virgin Mary is asking for me."† "Mary is always more loving than her lovers."‡ She is the dispenser of all the favors which the goodness of God concedes to the sons of Adam. Let us never forget it. St. Philip Neri said it. Would that he were here with his staff and beads to ravish our hearts with the love of the Madonna. But he is not far away if we want him to come to us, nor is Paradise either if we are prepared to enter it. O, man, there is a heaven, and that heaven it is in the power of the Blessed Virgin Mary to obtain for you! She is the gate of it. She was never invoked in vain. She is ready now at this present moment to hear your prayer, and commend you to her Son; and if Mary has prayed, heaven is yours. What is this heaven, and in

* St. Paul to the Romans, viii. 35, *et. seq.*

† Cornelius a Lapide. ‡ St. Ignatius, Martyr.

what does its happiness consist?* It is the everlasting abode of God and His saints. It is a place where there is everything you wish and nothing you do not wish. It is eternal consolation, and a society sweet and delightful. It is something better than you ever imagined. Do you desire it? The Blessed Virgin Mary can obtain it for you, and she is very compassionate. But you must pray.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

OUR OWN PERSEVERANCE.

THE Prince of the Apostles entreats us to keep ourselves as pilgrims and strangers on the earth, where we have not a lasting city, because we seek one that is above. We are now in an enemy's country. Life is subject to a thousand contingencies. The devil exerts all his malice, because he knows that he has but a short time. Snares are laid in every place. No man is safe. Not

* "The happiness of heaven consists in contemplating one God in three persons, and the sacred humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, overflowing with the torrents of the Deity. It consists also in seeing the Blessed Virgin Mary, filled with Christ, as Christ is filled with His Father; in seeing the brilliant assembly of the saints, and the magnificent body of the Church, animated by Christ, filled by Him with love, praise, adoration; and glorifying, through him, God the Father."—*J. J. Olier. O, Domina mea, Sancta Maria, perseverantiæ!*

one of us knows what a day will bring forth, and up to the present day we are miracles of the mercy of God. God grant us to be continual miracles of His mercy to the last.

The grace of a good death is something He does not owe us. An immense gift! In a moment to be enrolled among the citizens of heaven, and have a place there, and enjoy it forever! No more danger. No more snares. No more sorrow. No more temptation. Eternal beatitude. Everlasting peace!

Mortal, who art God's creation,
Why so little meditation
On the vast eternal station
Wherein death will leave thee?*

Time is short. Eternity is long. Forever! Did you ever pause over the word? Time—Eternity. What a difference! Wonder no longer that the martyrs would endure any torments cheerfully, sooner than abandon the Catholic Faith. Wonder not that Ireland's children are so tenacious of the faith for the preservation of which their fathers suffered so much. But shall we persevere? We have faith to day. Shall we have it to morrow? We hope to day. Shall we hope to-morrow? Perhaps to day we are in the charity of

* Homo Dei creatura,
Cur in carne moritura,
Est tam parva tibi cura
Pro æterna gloria?

God and His friendship, and He regards us with love and complacence. Will it be so in another month? With His grace it will. But like St. Philip Neri, let us pray Him each morning to take care of us that day, lest we betray Him, or His interests. "If I do not come home to-night," said the Saint, "look for me among the Jews." May God preserve us from ever betraying Him or any of His interests. These are not the days for half-Catholics. God wants soldiers confirmed in His service.

If we love anything better than Christ, we are not worthy of Him. If we deny Him before men, He will to a certainty deny us before God. Now He is patient. But let us not try His patience, for in the mean time the moment may come, on which eternity depends. Why is God in our days so patient? Why does no Prophet Isaias any longer complain: "Behold thou art angry.....there is none that riseth up and taketh hold of Thee."* "Because," says St. Bonaventure "there was no Blessed Virgin Mary then." Eternal thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, there is a Virgin Mother now, who averts chastisement, and obtains the grace of amendment and penance for sinners. *Columba fidelissima.* The most faithful dove bringing the olive branch of peace from God to the world. Eternal thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, there is one who,

* Isaias, lxiv. 5. 7.

because she is His mother, knows how to pacify Him, and when there is need, to rise up and stay his arm, as St. Dominic with his own eyes once saw her do. The instance is almost too familiar to be repeated.

He prayed in the Church of St. Peter, and was favored with a vision. The Son of God, seated on the right hand of His Father, rose up irritated against sinners, and holding in His hand three darts for the extirpation of the proud, the avaricious and the voluptuous. But Mary stayed His arm, and threw herself at His feet and prayed for mercy, and mercy, because of her prayer, was obtained. Eternal thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, that there is one who "stands in the presence of her Son, praying unceasingly for sinners."* "The Lord has placed in Mary the plenitude of all good; so that if aught of hope, or grace, or salvation, is in us, we know that we derive it from Mary."† Shall we persevere? We shall if the Blessed Virgin Mary prays for us.

"From depths below to arching sky,
The surges lift our bark on high,
With nodding mast, and sails awry,
And drifted anchor gone.

What marvel if in ills like these,
Weak nature totter, ill at ease,
Till thou, our Mother, swell the breeze
That wafts us to our own?"‡

* Venerable Bede. † St. Bernard. ‡ Paradisus Animæ.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

A GEM FROM SEGNERI.

MARY INVOKED AS OUR COMFORTER.*

"WHAT wonderful harmony is this which I find between the height of thy dignity and the bounty of thy heart, O Mother of all mercy! If I lift up mine eyes to behold the sublime throne of glory to which thou hast been assumed, my thoughts are confused, my very soul trembles, and I am lost in the contemplation of such exalted majesty. Thou most tender Virgin, by incomparable excellence the holiest of all pure creatures, less only than God Himself, the fairest work that ever proceeded from His divine hands, thou dost form in Heaven a peculiar order by thyself alone; and by that close tie of relationship, whereby thou art the Mother of Jesus, thou art raised to a degree almost divine. And yet, at this long distance from us, in the midst of so much greatness, not only dost thou not forget us in our afflictions here below, but rather thy power

* Segneri, servant of Mary instructed.

is to thee all the dearer, because thou art so much the better able to comfort us in our miseries. Other friends abandon me in my greatest calamities, but thou lookest upon me with more tender compassion when I am the most afflicted, and the greater my miseries the readier art thou to relieve them. When we call upon thee, thou comest immediately to our comfort; nay, how often, even without being invoked, dost thou anticipate our prayers, hastening to allay the storms which rise within our breasts, and in the midst of our very shipwreck, in the height of our despair, how often art thou a secure haven of peace and tranquillity! Blessed forever be that adorable hand of God which has made thee so powerful, and at the same time so full of compassion, and hast joined in thee the tender heart of the best of Mothers with the awful majesty of the greatest of Queens! Mayest thou also forever enjoy the kingdom over which thou reignest, seated on thy glorious throne, which becomes thee so well. Meanwhile, from this vale of misery, ravished by the incomparable beauties of thy soul, I do as heartily rejoice at thy greatness, as though it were my own; and I here solemnly declare that, rather than let thee lose the smallest ray of that immense glory which surrounds thee in Heaven, I would lay down a thousand lives, were they only mine. But there, glorious Virgin, who among so many high titles dost not disdain that of being my Comforter, en-

courage me daily, more and more, to bear up against all the troubles and afflictions which assail me. And especially be present to assist me in the most dangerous assault of all, at the hour of death, taking it for no small part of thy glory, to have found in me a misery, the best proportioned of any to the greatness of thy mercy. *Amen.*

CHAPTER XL.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

WHAT IT IS TO HAVE CONFIDENCE IN OUR LADY.

St. Ephrem, quoted by St. Alphonsus Liguori, calls devotion to our Lady "the passport of escape from hell."* God gives the love of the Blessed Virgin to those whom he wishes to save.† Mary is neither wanting in the power nor the will to save us.‡ The prophet David prayed to be rescued from hell, for the honor in which he held Mary: "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of thy house; take not away my soul with the wicked." Mary was the house, and Eternal Wisdom built her for himself. "He will not be lost," says St. Anselm, "for whom Mary has prayed but once." Enough has been said to convince the Catholic reader

* Orat. de Laud. v. † St. John Damascene. ‡ St. Bernard.

of the immense efficacy of the Virgin Mother's prayer. "Having this seal, the Lord knoweth who are His."*

Read the Glories of Mary, dear reader, if you look for an abundance of examples; where you will find that even one Hail Mary, persevered in every day, never went unrewarded. I did not commence to write a work of devotion to our Lady, but how can one speak of her without at the same time animating himself and others to love her? How many souls are famishing for the want of a little wholesome encouragement! And what encouragement like that which the knowledge of the Virgin Mary's power and compassion affords? Does not the Holy Church call her our hope, a title which it has already been shown is no exaggeration, but which she most justly deserves? Because God's Mother is powerful, will sinners presume? Never fear. If they begin to love Mary they will presently begin also to be afraid of sin, and from being afraid of it to avoid it, and having at last abandoned it they will find themselves hating it. If they love Mary she will pray for them and the Holy Ghost will enlighten them, and under the glare of a ray of that light sin will appear, hideous, and seen once in its true color, which is darkness, will not easily be forgotten. True of sin and the sinner, the same remarks are true also of error and souls held deluded in the wiles of false doctrine and

* Timothy ii. 19.

untruth. Let them invoke the Mother of God, and she will obtain their conversion, and find a place for them in that Church which her adorable Son established, and for the love of which He was prodigal of His own heart's blood.

One little act of true devotion to Mary from Catholic or from non-Catholic will, I repeat, never go unrewarded. Witness the example St. Alphonsus gives of that Lutheran lady in Augsburg who, passing by a little Catholic chapel, felt moved to send a silken cloth to the Blessed Virgin's altar, and just for that our dear Lady converted her. With good reason, then, does the enemy of all good hate most of all devotion to the Virgin Mary, and strives in every way to misrepresent it and hinder it; but Almighty God, who gave the command to honor our Father, gave also the command to honor our Mother too, and therefore we pay exalted honor to the Virgin Queen, because at the same time that she is Mother of God, He has been pleased to make her our Mother too; and as He gave to Solomon a heart wide as the shore of the sea, that he might be a fit monarch of so numerous a people, so to Mary He has given a heart wide as the expanse of heaven, because she is the Mother of the people of God, gathered from every nation and tribe and tongue on the face of the earth; and not Mother only, but also Queen.

Salve Regina, mater misericordiæ, vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra salve!

CHAPTER XLI.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

WHO WILL HELP ME?

THE successful answer to the above question involves our peace and tranquillity amid every danger; and if there was ever a time when a Catholic has often occasion so to interrogate himself, that time is now. "The days are evil;"* that is to say, the world is inundated with malice. Some have erred from the faith, others have kept the faith, but are loaded with sins, and their injustices have become as a heavy burden upon them. Others yet there are, thanks be to God, who have kept the faith and who act up to it, each one of them a light to enlighten the gentiles, and the glory of God's Catholic people. Now, if ever, the servant of God must be disinterested. Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and you have the word of eternal truth for it: everything else shall be added to you. Be true to God and your religion, and God will be true to you. Swerve not from this doctrine, lest you find your portion at last among the hypocrites. But the days are

* Ephesians, v. 15.

evil.* The world is inundated with malice. One trouble is gone, and another comes. Snares are thick and hidden. Every two months, or oftener, a new one shows its head. What is to become of our courage? What shall we do? Who will help us? Ah! *Dominus virtutem populo suo dabit.*† "The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people in peace." How? Where? When? As often as they call for help. We have helpers. They are in heaven. They have no more any care or anxiety about their own affairs, but they interest themselves all the more in ours. St. Joseph is one of them. Did you ever pray to him in good earnest, when you were in trouble and driven almost to desperation? If you did, I am sure he heard you, and answered you too, and that speedily. If you did not, do so the next time, when you are come into the depth of the sea, and the tempest has well nigh overwhelmed you. Did you beg the assistance of the holy angels? They have done wonderful things, and God has deputed them on purpose to help you. But we forget these angels, and leave them to help us as much as they charitably will

* The days are evil, but opportunities of exercising charity are always at hand, and "charity covers a multitude of sins." As others are less fervent, it is our part to be more fervent; and the more of evil we see around us, the more to be stimulated to do good works ourselves. "God is charity, and he who remains in charity abides in God, and God in him."—1 JOHN, iv.

† Psalm xxviii.

uninvoked, and no more. And the Queen of Angels! Did you call on her who was never invoked in vain? "You forgot to." Where then is your faith? Are you a Catholic? Perhaps one that hardly deserves the name. This was not the conduct of the men of faith, in the times that tried men's souls. They called on God, and He heard them. They invoked Blessed Mary and she assisted them. They flew to the patronage of St. Joseph, and told of wonderful results; and St. Michael at the bidding of his Queen did good battle for them. The court of heaven was powerful then, nor is it less so now. Only the men of our day trust more in creatures of earth than in God and His holy Mother and the Saints. True, the days *are* evil. Men are proud, haughty, disobedient, lovers of themselves. What could be said worse? But the means of grace are multiplied, and if we invoke God and His Saints with the same confidence as did our forefathers, to a certainty, we shall experience the same glorious results. Then let us be up and doing. "Heaven was not made for idlers."* The night is coming wherein no man can work. Let us make for ourselves firm and lasting friends of the Saints of God. But above all, let us implore of the Holy Ghost, the Master of prayer, the grace to invoke the glorious Mother of God in our necessities, with the confidence and devotion that we ought.

* St. Philip Neri.

"O, Mary, listen when we call;
Jesus thy words doth hear;
Lord, save us! Thou wilt ne'er disdain
Thy Virgin Mother's prayer."

CHAPTER XLII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS.

My work, all poor and imperfect as it is, is nearly completed. How much remains to be said about Our Lady that never was said! How much, too, in the writings of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church that has been overlooked, or is not accessible to the mass of readers. May the spirit of God enlighten intellects more worthy than mine, to treat worthily of her whose perfections outnumber the stars of heaven.*

It is All Saints Day of glorious memory, the day that tells of the crowd that no man could number. "O, how glorious is the kingdom, in which all the Saints rejoice with Christ! Clothed all in white, "they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."† They are inebriated with the plenty of God's house, and with the torrent of his pleasure He overwhelms them. "I in them,

* "Thou hast as many properties, O Virgin, as there are stars in heaven."—*St. Ildephonsus.*

† Ant. ad Magnificat, second Vespers of All Saints.

and thou in me ; that they may be made perfect in one .....that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee ; that they also may be one in us."* There all is eternal love, all peace, all perfect order and serene tranquillity.

All behold the glory of God, and are filled with it themselves ; but one more splendid than all the rest, clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. "Come, and I will show thee the Bride of the Lamb,† the ark of the Testament seen when the temple of God was opened in heaven, amid lightnings and voices, and an earthquake, and great hail."‡ The Lamb Himself is her light, and He makes her splendid and magnificent. Her attire is that of a queen surrounded with variety, for as star differs from star in glory, so is it with the diverse splendor of God's Saints, who form the court of heaven, and are, as it were, the "hem of Christ's garment."‖ O, beautiful garment of Jesus, white as the newly fallen snow, pure, chaste, and like it, icy cold, if by coldness chastity be understood.§ His face on Thabor shone as the sun, and his raiment white as snow ; though much

* John xvii. 21—23. † Apoc., xxi. 9. ‡ Apoc., xi. 19.

‖ The Blessed Virgin bestowed on Jesus Christ the sacred garment of His humanity.

§ Tropologice vestes Christi sunt sancti ; hi enim eum ornant ut vestes, suntque candidi et frigidi ut nix, quia casti, puritate fulgidi. Ita S. Gregorius, 32 Moral., c. 7. Apud Cornelium a Lapide in cap. xvii. Matthæi.

whiter that living raiment, whence He put on His holy vesture when He came down from heaven to assume our mortality, and was made flesh and dwelt among us. Hail, temple of God! Hail, tabernacle in which God has dwelt! Hail, vesture of Jesus! Hail, Queen of All Saints!

"O, Jesus, let Thine anger cease;
Thy Virgin Mother, for our peace,
At Thy tribunal pleading stands,
And mercy earnestly demands."*

CHAPTER XLIII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE WIDE-SPREAD MANTLE OF OUR LADY'S CHARITY.

PARADISE was just now our theme; Paradise, where the Virgin Mary is seen in her glory and splendor, and a torrent of chaste and holy joy makes glad the city of God.† Be patient, and God will give you in heaven a plenty of all that is good. Even your senses will know a satisfaction that is pure, and without alloy, disgust or fatigue.‡ It is a resplendent company, that great crowd of all nations, and tribes, and people, and tongues, singing benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and strength to our God forever.§ Imagine, if you can, your first emotions when

* Hymn, "Placare Christe Servulis." See title page.
† Psalm xlv. 5. ‡ Crasset. § Apocalypse vii. 12.

you find yourself one of them, filled with the glory of God to your utmost capacity! *It is good for me to be here!** Thus far of Paradise. How easy to change the scene, if we descend into the uttermost parts of the earth. Shall I say here even one word of that dismal and eternal outer-darkness, "where *no order*, but everlasting horror dwells?"† It is worth remembering, since it is an awful, heart-rending reality. One word I will say. Love the Blessed Virgin, and you will not go there. You have not yet forgotten the words of St. Alphonsus Liguori to all who came to see him during his last sickness. "Be devout to the Blessed Virgin; he who is devoted to her will be saved."‡ That, too, is worth remembering. But there is another region, and it is not heaven, neither is it hell. All there are in the charity of God. All there begin to realize as they never did before what it is to wound charity—what it is to seek anything out of God, or even to slight His love. All sigh after heaven with unutterable groanings, yet must not go there till all the rust of sin has been taken off them in the fire of dreadful tribulation. That is purgatory. But the Mother of God has power there. Thousands of fervent Hail Marys ascend on their behalf from every corner of the Cath-

* Matthew xvii. 4. † Job x.

‡ "He recommended every one to visit her images, to recite the Rosary, and to fast in her honor on Saturday, and on the Vigils of her feasts." See Oratorian Life of St. Alphonsus.

olic world, and every hour tells that the abundance of her charity has prevailed to cover a multitude of sins, and effect the deliverance of one who, for whole dreary years, pined in anguish

St. Alphonsus asserts that this kind Mother sometimes condescends even to enter into that holy prison to visit and console these, her afflicted children, and quotes these words from the revelations of St. Bridget: "I am the Mother of all the souls in purgatory, and all the sufferings which they merit for the sins committed in life are, every hour while they remain there, alleviated in some measure by my prayers." * *Profundum abyssi penetravi.* How often even in this world does not this Consoler of the afflicted penetrate the abyss of our sorrow, drive away sadness and fear, and in a moment bring joy, strength, contentment, and resignation to the will of God! "I was sick and in prison, and you visited me."

* See "Glories of Mary."

CHAPTER XLIV.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

WHO DISLIKES DEVOTION TO MARY?

It was revealed to Father Francis Ypez, who died in the odor of sanctity, that this holy man had knowledge from above that the devil particularly disliked two sorts of persons, through whose means he experienced great losses, namely: those who labored to promote devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and those who belonged to the Confraternity of the Scapular, because it rarely happened that any of those persons fell into his power at the hour of death, the greater number being delivered from his snares by our Blessed Lady.

Bishop Ullathorne will tell you the reason of this. God, who resists the proud and gives His grace to the humble, put down the mighty Lucifer from his seat, and exalted that sweet and lowly Maiden whose heart uttered a good word when declaring her graces to the King; she declared that her soul magnified the Lord, and her spirit exulted in God her Saviour. Why? *Deposuit potentes de sede:* He put down the mighty.

Et exaltavit humiles: And exalted His humble one, even to the wonderful dignity of Mother of God. But hear the Bishop: "The sin of Satan began in gigantic pride, went on to ambition, and brought on his final destruction, through his envy and hatred of the Son of God incarnate of the Virgin Mary. Hence his deadly hatred of that meek and holy Mother, who is the created cause from which his woes have sprung." * The idea suggested by Bishop Ullathorne is summed up in brief, thus: "It is clear from the sacred Scriptures, that the beginning of Lucifer's fall was pride and ambition. Many of the Fathers teach that he completed his perdition through envy of the prerogatives of man. Scotus, Suarez and others, maintain that the object of Satan's envy was the hypostatic union of God with man in Jesus: that he accounted himself more worthy to be one with God than any human creature: that he refused to recognize, confess, and adore the Son of God as made of a woman, made under the law, and made a little lower than the angels, for the sufferings of death. † The Apostle asks: "To which of the angels *hath God*

* Bishop Ullathorne's Treatise on the Immaculate Conception: Murphy, Baltimore.

† "When our Lord says of the Devil that 'he was a manslayer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth,' He seems to refer to the time of his fall, and to intimate that he was a manslayer at that same beginning, when he stood not in the truth."—Bishop Ullathorne.

said, at any time, Thou art my son; to-day have I begotten thee?"

Wonder no longer that the enemy of God and of the happiness of men, is the bitter enemy of devotion to Mary the Mother of God. And here we ask, what once answered, is not to be asked again.

Does the glory of Mary detract from the glory of God? "No," answers Segneri, "Christ never gave greater demonstrations of His sovereign power, than when He made a creature so powerful as Mary. It is no disparagement to the loadstone that it communicates its power of attraction to the iron or steel which it touches."* What a loadstone have we here! Truly a magnet of hearts. "My Mother," said the Lord to St. Catharine of Sienna, "my Mother is that most sweet food (*esca dulcissima*) by which I draw sinners to myself." "Come from Libanus, my Spouse, come from Libanus, come; thou shalt be crowned from the dens of the lions, from the mountains of the leopards."† Sinners are lions and leopards. But the Blessed Virgin, full of grace, attracts them, and knows how to soften the hardest hearts, and fertilize the most barren. Everywhere are seen the fruits of her compassion.

* "On the contrary, it is an evident proof of its greater virtue, showing that it possesses it in so eminent a degree, as to be able to communicate it to other things, and yet suffer no detriment itself."—SEGNERI, *Servant of Mary instructed.*

† Cant. iv. 8.

Uninvoked, she sometimes helps. How certainly then, if asked! God has deposited with her the uncontrolled disposal of His treasures.

She is a Queen at His right hand in a vesture of gold.* Her prayer is never denied, her liberality is unsurpassed. "The life of every man is a continuous series of Mary's liberalities, marking out to him, by their frequency and number, that brilliant pathway to salvation from which, unless willfully blind, he can never go astray."† "This wisdom went before me, and I knew not that she was the mother of them all." ‡

We participate in our Lady's liberality; we are preserved from great temptations, and delivered out of them; we obtain the place in life that suits us, *because she has prayed for us*, and no other reason; and we forget to keep this in mind, and thank her. Her love has done it, and ignorant both of the great tenderness of her love and of the multiplicity of her favors, we forget that she was the Mother of all our happiness. "I knew not that she was the Mother of them all."

Truly this is no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven. "I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of this Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth." Solomon's temple was only a shadow of her. The foundations thereof were of precious gems, because

* A resistentibus dexteræ tuæ custodi me.

† Segneri. ‡ Sap. vii. 12.

it was a figure of Mary. "He paved the floor with most precious marble of great beauty."* An immensity of cedar, too, a most incorruptible wood, entered into the construction of that temple, because it represented the Virgin Mary, whom God never suffered to see corruption, nor gave the enemy any power to hurt her. Firs and cedars, fit emblems of Mary, entered exclusively into the construction of that magnificent edifice, yet not so magnificent as she who knew only a Divine Architect, and angels rather than men to inspect the work, exclaiming in admiration, "Who is this that cometh up from the desert?"

"I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of this house, and have dared to say some words of her whom only Thou, who didst create her in the Holy Ghost, saw, and numbered, and measured." An angel measured the holy city; how, then, should I presume to give even a faint notion of the beauty, loveliness, compassion and power of the Virgin Mary? "Even as Solomon, when his mother was announced, rose and bowed to her, and placed her on his right hand, on a throne before all

* 2 Paralip. iii. v. 6. See also 3 Kings v. 17. "To represent the immense extent of that foundation of grace, if we may call it so, which, contrary to the ordinary course of providence, she was to receive at the moment of her conception, for the ground-work of all her future sanctity, Almighty God ordained that, contrary also to the common practice, the foundation of Solomon's temple, which was an emblem of Mary, should be laid with the richest materials to be found."—SEGNERI.

others, so is Mary placed between the heavenly host and her Son, so that when we think of her we may lift our minds and thoughts to her as one enjoying heaven like a solitary, brilliant luminary, shining between Him and the highest rank of those blessed hosts. And why? *Because she is the Mother of God.*" *

"Mary moder well thou bee,
Mary moder thenke on me;
Mayden and moder was never none,
Togeder, Lady, saf thou allone."

Lydgate's Lyfe of our Lady.†

CHAPTER XLV.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

A WORD ON PRAYER IN GENERAL, AND PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN IN PARTICULAR.

WHO shall tell the mighty power of prayer? *Credenti omnia possibilia sunt:* To him that believes all things are possible. God has promised to hear us. He has *promised.* He will hear, and will answer. But He will take His own time, as He has a perfect right to do. He will answer, certainly, but in the way that in His view, which is the only true view, suits the case the best. Your prayer is scarcely yet out of your

* Cardinal Wiseman. † MS. Harl. 2382, fol. 86.

lips, and the angel has recorded it. It waits an an swer. The answer will come. Never fear—it will, infallibly, come; but in God's time, in God's way, and according to the view God takes of the petition you have made. The liberality of God is such that generally we receive, sooner or later, immensely more than we ever expected. Seek first and foremost the kingdom of God and His justice, and rest assured that everything else will be added. To be acceptable and pleasing to Almighty God, is our first need. If we are well with Him, all is well with us; if we are not well with Him, nothing is well with us. To be adorned with sanctifying grace—that grace which makes us pleasing and agreeable to Almighty God—should be the first object of our desire. Some seek the "everything else added" first, willing afterwards to look after the kingdom of God to be established within them. This will not do. It is inverting the order laid down by our Saviour, who said, "Seek *first* the kingdom of God." It is not far from every one of us.

The Catholic Church is everywhere, and with her the means of establishing in individual souls that other kingdom of God which comes without observation, yet is known by its beautiful fruits—charity, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Are you one of the unregenerate, still in the darkness where Adam left you, and in your own actual sins too? Invoke holy Mary, who pities

you, and who was never invoked in vain. Virgin Mother of God, help me! Do not hesitate to say it, for it will work a miracle for you, and will not be forgotten. Invoke, then, her who despises no one, and remember that the font is ready, and the Priest of God is waiting to pour over you clean waters to wash you from all your defilements, and make you an enrolled citizen of heaven, a child of God, enjoying all the glorious privileges of the Catholic Church, born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

O, horrible original sin! How dare a man live one hour in it! The sentence declared to Nicodemus stands firm forever: "Amen I say to you, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he *cannot* enter into the kingdom of God." Are you an unbaptized one? Invoke Mary. Seek instruction. Believe and be baptized. Do not wait long when delay is so dangerous. Enough has been said. My speech now is to the children of the Church—to Catholics. Are you among the just? God only knows. But remember that even so you cannot persevere unless Mary prays; and if you do not invoke her, you cannot expect her to exert herself in your behalf. Pray, then, and pray in good earnest.

Does the Devil tempt you sometimes with sadness and *discouragement?* That is the very time to prove

that you have a confidence never to be shaken in the power and assistance of Mary. Do immediately something in her honor. Read her office, say her beads, make ejaculations; whatever you do, do something, and do it with earnest, desperate (if the word is allowed) confidence. Mary is powerful, and will prevail. Prayer is invincible. In the twinkling of an eye, something is done for you. You are strengthened, you are cheered, you are encouraged, for you remember what you forgot before, that if God is for us no one can be against us. You never thought prayer was so strong. But it is, and there is nothing like it. Be a man of prayer, and you may be found worthy to be a martyr—in will at least, if not in deed. Who knows? Perhaps already the word has gone forth, and God, through Mary's prayer, has granted you the very grace you need the most. Ah! if our Blessed Lady be for us, who can be against us?

Are you deep in sin? The Blessed Virgin has prayed for such as you, and even worse, and obtained their conversion and their perseverance in good, and they are now in Heaven, praising and blessing God for all eternity. Will you hesitate to invoke her after that? You are now in the dark and horrible night of mortal sin, it is true. But when God made the sun He did not forget to create also a lesser light to rule the night. The Blessed Virgin smiles on you from the

moment you utter a "Virgin Mother, pray for me," and her smile is as a ray of silvery light to lead you gently back to God and goodness and holy charity. It is not too late; now is the time. Invoke her, and be sure you are not the first for whom she sought and obtained the wedding garment of charity. "Then nobody should despair." It is true nobody should. The goodness of God has provided abundant means for our salvation, and not the least of them the Blessed Virgin Mary, that most sweet food by which he draws sinners to himself. I never get tired, you see, of repeating those delightful words addressed to St. Catharine of Sienna. Mary is indeed powerful—more powerful than any of us yet imagined. When we pray to her, let us do so in earnest, and she will make us saints, and confer innumerable benefits both of soul and body. "I love them that love me," is her motto. St. Aloysius commended to her daily his soul and his body, all his hope and all his consolation, his distresses and his miseries, his life and the end thereof. Let us do the same, and she will obtain for us the grace to love God, which is a compendium of every good. God has entrusted the Sacred Heart of Jesus to Mary, says St. Alphonsus, that she may obtain for it all the love and veneration it deserves. Then up and be doing. Let us not be behind time in doing what will weigh on the right side of our account for eternity; for, as St. Philip Neri said,

"Death will not be behind his time." Mary has become to all men an immense channel of grace—a very aqueduct of God's grace, if we will only use it.

In spite of all our demerits, she has it in her power to work wonders for us, as she did for Ratisbonne and a host of others. She is always and ever the same benignant, compassionate, loving, tender Virgin Mary. Do you wish to be the first unhappy man she did not help? Let her know that you do not. Say it to her in so many words—I do not wish to be the first. Let us seek grace, and seek it through Mary. As the tongs takes the live coal out of the burning furnace and holds it in safe and close embrace, so she brought from heaven the Son of God to become incarnate, and for nine months held in close embrace that charity which is of God. The heavenly urn that contained the manna from heaven, she is redolent of the sweet and delightful fragrance of the body and blood of the Son of God. Her womb was the bridal chamber where God espoused the nature of man. There mercy and truth met together, justice and peace kissed each other. She was the heavenly bridge on which the Word made flesh was borne to us.

Listen to St. Thomas of Aquin: "The prophet Ezechiel says (xliii. 2): 'Behold the glory of the God of Israel came in by the way of the East,' which means the Mother of the Son of God; "and the earth shone

with His majesty,' which intimates the Saviour of the world." * This is she of whom Isaias sung: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive." This is the burning bush that was not consumed, the fleece of Gideon on whom fell copious showers of divine grace when the remaining earth all around remained dry; the ark of salvation of a shipwrecked world, the earth that opened and budded forth a Saviour, whom Zachary, long ages before her birth, bid rejoice and be glad, since the Lord had magnified Himself to do great things for her;—in a word, the Virgin Mary, the succor of the miserable, the help of the needy, the hope of even the despairing, as long as the world shall be. Go always, then, with confidence to this throne of grace. "Be devout to the Madonna, keep yourself from sin, and God will deliver you from your evils." The words are St. Philip Neri's, and ever to be remembered. "Let us enter into the sentiments of our Lord towards His Mother, who is our Mother also. Let us willingly accept the dependence He wishes us to have on her, and by this humble and loving subjection honor that in which He was pleased to place Himself." * Yes, in this consists true devotion to our Lady, to accept the dependence not that our Lord is simply *willing* we should have on her, but which He absolutely *wishes* and desires. "De-

* See "Compendium of St. Thomas's Theology." Duffy, Dublin.
† Lallemo nt.

votion to the Blessed Virgin is actually necessary, because there is no better means of obtaining God's graces than through His most holy Mother.*

Let us learn, then, to pray to her as we ought, in earnest, child-like confidence. *Credenti omnia possibilia sunt:* To him that believes, all things are possible. The prayers of the Saints worked wonders while they were on the earth, and even moved mountains where there was need for it to be done. Prayer is now what it always was when fortified with the same conditions. It depends for its efficacy on the promise of Jesus Christ, who promised only what He meant in every age to fulfill to the letter.† We have come into an age when, because iniquity has abounded, charity has in many places become cold; but holy prayer, now as ever, is omnipotent, capable of moving mountains, opening prison doors, softening hard hearts, relieving

* St. Philip Neri.

† The wonderful power of prayer was never so strikingly illustrated as in the life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, who to the letter fulfilled the promise of Christ our Lord, and by his prayer moved a mountain out into the sea, because it stood in the way of building a church. Let us have the faith of God, and we shall move by our prayer many mountains that stand in the way of His glory on the earth. Such mountain movers are much wanted now. Prayer is powerful and will prevail. The wonderful promises Christ made concerning the prayer of faith, stand firm and immovable forever. But the obstacles to the glory of God, seem they never so firm and enduring, are not immovable. They wait only for a Gregory Thaumaturgus to take them out of the way, and bid them begone to the sea. The power of prayer is tremendous, if we have the faith of God. See the eleventh chapter of St. Mark. Read it. Ruminate it.

the miserable, converting sinners to God. And if the prayer of the just on earth will do all these things, what will not that of the holy Mother of God?

"There is no better way of obtaining God's graces than through His most holy Mother."

CHAPTER XLVI.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

SOME INTERESTING EXAMPLES FROM CATHOLIC ANTIQUITY REGARDING DEVOTION TO OUR BLESSED LADY.

For the leading facts of the present chapter, the design of which is to increase a little the size of my work, as it is passing through the press, I am indebted to the learned work of Rev. Dr. Rock, entitled "The Church of our Fathers." The author remarks first regarding our Blessed Lady, that "our forefathers loved her so, because Christ had loved her; had filled her with grace; had made her the highest, holiest of all created beings; had taken His flesh from her womb; had wished, as He still wishes, all His followers to love her for His sake. Amid all those star-like souls glowing round the throne of God, the brightest to our forefathers' eyes was Mary, the sweet, the holy Virgin; the Mother of Christ, the mild, the spotless Mary; her,

that one created being, hallowed by her Maker and Redeemer with a light of glory outshining the dazzling fire gushing from the choirs of burning cherubim, did they look upon and love before every other Saint; unto her did they as children cry; her, as their fond Mother, did they beseech to become the bearer of their sighs, and promises, and prayers, to her Divine Son." Dr. Rock then favors his readers with the following, entitled "Revelations of love that Jesu Christ, our endless blisse, made in XVI shewings to Mother Juliana, C. A. D. 1373, a holy ankress of Norwich." The extract is as follows: "And with this chear of mirth and joy, our good Lord looked down on the right side, and brought to my mind where our Lady stood in the time of his passion, and said, 'Wilt thou see her?' And in this sweet word, as if He had said, 'I wot well that thou wilt see my Blessed Mother; for after myself, she is the highest joy that I might shew thee, and most liking and worship to me; and most she is desired to be seen of all my blessed creatures.' And for the marvellous, high, and singular love that He hath to this sweet word, as if He said, 'Wilt thou see how that I love her, that thou might joy with me in the love that I have in her, and she in me?' And also to more understanding, this sweet word our good Lord speaketh in love to all mankind that shall be saved, as it were all to one person; as if he said, 'Wilt thou see in her how

thou art loved? For thy love I have made her so high, so noble, so worthy; and this liketh me; and so will I that it do thee.' "—*Revelations of Divine Love made to Mother Juliana*, etc.

"The image of our Ladye," says an old English writer, "is paynted with a childe in the left arme, in token that she is Mother of God, and with a lyly, or els with a rose, in her right hand, in token that she is mayden withoute ende, and flowre of all women."

"There be some people," says another, "that asketh a questyon why there stondeth a wyne potte with lylyes bytweene our Ladye and Gabriel the angelle at her salutacyon. This is the cause for our Lady at her salutacion conceyved by the feythe."

"¶ Narratio.

"¶ It byfelle thus upon a Cristmasse daye that a crysten man and a Jew sat togyder and spake of the concepcyon of our Ladye; and as they were there, stode a wynne potte tofore them with a lylye there in. Then sayde the crysten man, we byleve that our Ladye conceyved lyke as thise lylye conceyveth the colour of grene, and after bringeth forthe a wythe flour wythouth craft of man or any perynge to the stalke, right so our Ladye conceyved of the Holy Ghoste, and after brought her Sone, Oure Lorde Jesu Criste withoute any wemme of her body that is flour and chefe of all wymmen. Then

sayde the Jewe, when I see a lylye sprynge out of the dede stalke that standeth in this pot, thenne will I byleve that thou sayste to be true. And anone ther wyth sprang a white lylye out of the dede stalke that stode in the same wyne potte. And when the Jewe saw that, anone he felle downe to the grounde upon his knees, and sayd thus, Ladye, now I see well that thou conceyved with the Holye Ghoste, our Lord Jesu Crist Godd is Sone of Heven, and thou were clene mayde bothe before the byrth and after the byrth. And so anone he was cristened. And this is the cause wherefore that the potte with the lylye is set betwene Oure Lady and the angell." *

The zeal which Catholic boys used to have to commit to memory certain anthems in the beautiful language of the Church, through their love to the Blessed Virgin, is beautifully illustrated by Dr. Rock, in the following passage from Chaucer. The scene is laid in a village school:

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
Down at the ferther ende, in which ther were
Children and hepe comen of Cristen blood
That lerned in that scole yere by yere,
Swiche manere doctrine as men used there;
That is to say, to singen and to rede,
As smale children don in hir childhede.

* * * * *

* *The Festyvall*, printed at Rouen, by Martin Morin, A. D. 1499.

This litel childe his litel book lerning,
As he sate in the scole at his primere,
He *Alma Redemptoris* herde sing,
As children lered hir antiphonere:
And as he dorst, he drow him nere and nere,
And herkened ay the wordes and the note,
Til he the firste vers conde al by rote.*

Would that Catholic boys and girls would emulate the example of the above. They take much pains to learn various foreign languages, having, many of them, both leisure and opportunity to make themselves familiar with the never-changing language of the Catholic Church, if they but would. St. Francis of Sales recommends every Catholic to learn to say his *Pater Ave* and *Creed* in Latin; and like the little boy immortalized by Chaucer, to commit to memory now and then an *Alma Redemptoris* or *Salve Regina*, in honor of our Blessed Lady, would not be amiss. Pardon the digression, dear reader. I am writing, for the love of the Blessed Virgin, what occurred to me as I transcribed Catholic Chaucer's verses.

Dr. Rock has illustrated that portion of his work which treats of our Lady with a curious old picture, which I wish I had it in my power to have inserted here. It is called weighing the soul; and St. Michael holds the balance. The idea intended to be conveyed is best described in the following legend:

* Chaucer: The Prioress Tale.

"There was a man ye whiche was rauysshed in jugement tofore God, for he had moche synned. And the devyll was there and sayd, ye have no thynge on this soule but it ought for to be myn, for I have thereof an instrumente publycke, and by the ryght of this instrument publycke he ought to be juged to me. And thenne our Lord sayd, late the man speke: but the man spake not. And the devyl sayd yet agayne, the soule is myne, for yf he hathe done ony good dedes, ye wicked dedes passeth the good wythoute comparyson. And our Lord sayd, brynge forthe the balaunce, and late all the good and evyl be weyed, and than veryte and ryghtwysnes sayd to the synner, renne with all thy thoughte to the Ladye of Mercye whiche sytteth by the juge, and studye to call her to thy helpe: and whan he had so done, the Blessed Vyrgyne Marye came to his helpe, and layde her hande upon the balaunce on ye syde where as were but few good dedes, and the devyl enforced hym to draw on ye other syde, but the Moder of Mercy wanne and obteyned, and delyvered the synner. And thenne he came agayne to hymself and amended his lyfe." *

Similar examples are to be found in the glories of Mary of St. Alphonsus, miracles of the mercy and compassion of Mary. "Let us, therefore, have the fear of God before our eyes in all we do, soliciting also the in-

* Ye Golden Legend.

tercession of the ever-unspotted Virgin Mary, our Lady and Mother of God."*

May we praise Jesus and Mary while we live, and for all eternity.†

CHAPTER XLVII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

SAPIENTIA ÆDIFICAVIT SIBI DOMUM.‡

"WISDOM hath builded herself a house; she has hewn out seven columns."§ By the common consent of the Fathers, the word *house*, as it is used in this place, signifies the Blessed Virgin Mary, already chosen from eternity to be the great Mother of God.‖

* Council of Nice, Act. vi.

† The desire to praise God in Heaven is more noble than the desire simply to enjoy Him. On this account, says Segneri, the seraphim who cry Holy, Holy, Holy, veiled their faces with their wings—to signify that they would willingly relinquish the privilege of seeing God, for the sake of being permitted to praise Him forever.—*Manna Animæ* Nov. 1.

‡ I am indebted for this beautiful meditation on the Immaculate Conception, to Segneri's Manna Animæ. Tom. IV. Bambergæ, 1763.

§ Prov. ix. 1.

‖ St. Bonaventure wishes to be applied to her that verse of Psalm xcii.: "Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for length of days." St. Epiphanius hæres. 73, adds: "Solomon, instead of saying, the Word was made flesh, says, Wisdom has builded herself a house. St. Ignatius ep. ad Philippenses has these words: "Sapientia ædificavit sibi domum, et factus est sicut homo Deus cum corpore, quod suscepit ex Virgine, non ex collocutione scilicet, aut semine viri:

About to descend on the earth, He undoubtedly chose for Himself a house; but that is not to say that He *hired* one, fitting some ordinary woman for this great office of Mother; rather He *built* one, with design, industry, architecture, rule. He *built*, and for whom? He built *for Himself*. He did not build in order to hire it to another, but for Himself only, that it should be His own resting place, His own receptacle, and therefore a house worthy of God—a house which no one ever inhabited before. For as He willed to be the Son of Mary, so He willed to be the only Son. Now considering all this, did He not study to make her with all those perfections, prerogatives, and qualities which would tend to render her more worthy of love? There is no monarch who, when there would be question of a piece of carpenter work, especially were it his own royal throne, would spare expense. Think you that the Eternal Word held a different manner of acting? On the contrary, in this place He attributes to Himself the name of Wisdom rather than any other. *Wisdom builded herself a house*, that you may understand that He took care, as supreme Architect, of a building so beautiful, to keep aloof from it whatever was imperfect, distorted, or unbecoming, and adorn it in a manner so surpassing that to all it should appear

Virgo enim, inquit Isaias, c. 7, in utero concipiet et pariet filium." Vide plura apud Cornelium a Lapide, in Cap. 9, Proverbiorum.

as evidently a work made on purpose to give a specimen of His wisdom. And on this account, if there were wanting any other rule by which to measure the unspeakable prerogatives and privileges of Mary, it would suffice, when once you heard that she was built by Wisdom, and built only for His own house, and not that of another. "Wisdom hath builded herself a house."

2. Now, consider what kind of a prince that would be, who, having built himself a sumptuous palace, would permit, before he went into it himself, that his own sworn enemy and betrayer should live there first, and poison it with his pestiferous breath. So far would this be from any one to permit, that rather he would not suffer a foul and contagious man such as this to come within a thousand miles of his house, if he could help it. And will any one believe that when the Eternal Word built Himself a house so beautiful as the Virgin, and built it only for Himself, He would suffer his betrayer, the Devil, to inhabit it before Him; and not only to inhabit it, but to take possession of it by force of sin—that sin which we call original? This, truly, does not seem in any way credible; for in what manner should He leave this possession to the demon? Should it be driven by necessity, or by free choice? If driven by necessity, then He had no power to help it; if by choice, then He did not love the Blessed Vir-

gin enough to wish to help it. Is there any one who is ready to grant this great absurdity? "Wisdom builded herself a house:" it is therefore to be believed that He made her for Himself and Himself only; and if He could not bear to have the demon come near her, how could He endure to have him inhabit her before Himself? It was the part of Wisdom to construct for Himself a house so worthy; it became His Providence to protect her from all hostile incursion. "By Wisdom a house will be built, and by prudence it will be strengthened."*

3. Take notice now, how that, in order that this house should be yet more magnificent, it is added that Wisdom, while it was building, erected many columns, which at the same time should support and adorn it. "She has hewn out seven columns;" that is to say, *many*, a manner of speaking much used in Scripture. These columns were virtues, which adorned the soul of the Virgin. Who shall say how many? They were universal, for the term *seven* in the sacred pages indicates this. "By the number seven universality is designated." Yet may we recount seven not as a distinction in number, but in difference. The three theological virtues, *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity;* the four cardinal, *Prudence*, *Justice*, *Fortitude*, and *Temperance*. Behold the seven pillars! All these were in the

* Prov. xxiv.

Blessed Virgin; not as in us, vacillating, but firm and stable, and therefore are they called columns, because they were never moved from their place, but from the very first made stable by confirmation in grace, than which anything more permanent and surpassing could not be found. *Ego confirmavi columnas ejus:* "I have confirmed her columns." * When you behold columns so beautiful, what remains but that you should be vehemently inflamed with the love of them? Admire them, love them, kiss them with the lips of a devout heart, express them in yourself. It is well indeed to praise the virtues of our Lady, it is well to love them, it is well to admire them, but it is best of all to imitate them.

And you—what will you do, except with your whole heart to exult with the Virgin Mary on account of this election God made of her for such a state, that she should be the Mother of her Lord; whence, if so many other prerogatives flowed in upon her, you can easily judge that this also was among them, that she should be conceived without sin. "Golden columns on silver foundations, says the Lord, and not on foundations of clay." †

Thus far Father Paul Segneri, of the Society of Jesus, a most devout servant of our Blessed Lady, who in the year of his death was engaged in writing a beau-

* Ps. lxxiv. 4. † Eccles. xxvi. 23.

tiful explanation of the *Magnificat*, which he did not live to finish. Will you take it as a digression, dear reader, if I conclude with a few words about him? "At the beginning of his sickness, he wrote in a book belonging to the infirmary, the following words: "Formula, by which you shall admonish Father N. N. of his death. Rejoice now, my Father; the hour is come when you will no longer offend God." On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, he received in bed the most holy Communion in honor of the ever Blessed Virgin, and offered himself entirely as a holocaust to the Divine will. As his pains increased, he was heard to pronounce those words of St. Bernard on the Psalm: "Abyss calls on abyss; the abyss of misery on the abyss of mercy:" *Abyssus abyssum invocat; abyssus miseriæ invocat abyssum misericordiæ.* Having received holy viaticum on the 9th of December, 1694, the day after the feast of the Immaculate Conception, and within the Octave of the same, and passed a few hours in a placid agony, the holy Father, towards the close of the night, sweetly gave up his spirit into the hands of that Lord who had created it, and went, as we hope, to shine above as a star of the brightest light.* "Mary makes death sweet to her servants."

* It will make a long note, but what Father Segneri said about holy prayer is so valuable to the Catholic reader and servants of Mary, that I cannot forbear to transcribe it. "His method of prayer in the beginning was that of simple meditation, with an active exertion

of the understanding, and fervent affections of the will on the different mysteries and passages of the Holy Scripture, from which source in a great measure he drew those eminent lights which he afterwards committed to writing in four small volumes, entitled, 'The Manna of the Soul.' After some time he appears to have made a change in the above method, employing himself wholly in supplicating God, and begging favors from Him, in the manner our Divine Master Himself taught us in the Lord's Prayer. 'My present hope,' says he in a letter, 'is entirely founded on the infallible efficacy which prayer has of obtaining the object of its requests from God, provided that they be really for our good. Oh! what glorious words are those which Christ made use of: 'Ask and you shall receive.' Could He have made the promise more clearly, more universally, with less exception? All that is required of us is to ask with perseverance. We have nothing else to do but to ask of God, by the merits of His Son, that He will make us His true servants, His true friends, and then we may leave all to Him, who will, undoubtedly, find some means to accomplish our desire. As for myself, I am resolved to assail His ears without interruption, and to repeat my prayers until I become importunate; nor am I discouraged at seeing myself so miserable, so wretched, and so devoid of all merits, because I profess to be like a beggar asking relief from God, the great almsgiver. And who does not know, that in the case of a beggar, we never look to his merits or his claims upon our favor, as we do in that of laborers, servants, and the like? His very misery is the great claim of the poor man. Be this, however, as it may, Christ cannot retract His words; He has promised that whoever shall persevere to ask in His name, shall be heard. If we are constant in asking, the thing is done. We have no excuse then; let us ask, let us importune, let us render ourselves troublesome to God, if this can be; but it certainly cannot, for, on the contrary, we then become more dear to Him; and it is not he who asks that is troublesome, but rather he who will not ask, like Achaz, who said, *Non petam*, 'I will not ask.' "—*Oratorian Life of Segneri*, p. 113.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

LOVE MARY IMMACULATE.

St. John the Evangelist thunders in our ears: "Love not the world, nor those things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him." What the reason of so solemn a warning? "For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life."* Then all we love we are to love in God, and for God, and out of Him nothing. In Him all things are sacred to us. "How vile seems the earth when I look upon heaven:" *Quid enim mihi est in cœlo.* And presently he adds: "Beside Thee, what have I desired upon the earth, O thou God of my heart, and God my portion forever!" How vile seems the earth when I look upon heaven! I look upon the earth, and I see the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, the pride of life. I am not as-

* 1 John, xi. 15.

tonished that St. John warned me to beware of loving such a world. What is there in it to love, where the love of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary does not reign, but only the love of sin and of self? Men run to and fro, and here and there is one who loves God with all his heart and his neighbor as himself. Why should I love this world? I look up to heaven, and I see there everything to love; the glory of God, and Jesus glorified, and Mary in splendor untold, and a crowd that no man could number of the poor in spirit, and meek, and clean of heart, and peace-makers, praising God in everlasting felicity, and among them a choir of the Blessed Virgin's favorites, singing a song that no one else knows how to sing, for they are the undefiled, who erewhile entoned *Beati immaculati in via.* Ah! that is a glorious sight, and I must love them, and sigh after their beautiful and eternal city, which once I have viewed from afar, as it were from over the distant hills.

Then here I must begin to learn to love God, and be devout to Holy Mary, which itself is a sign that when I die my place will be in peace, and my abode in Holy Sion. Wholly inflamed with the love of God, Mary Immaculate inflames all who love and approach her. The bearer of the flame of Divine love, she renders her lovers like herself, *portatrix ignis*, one who carries fire;

fire out of a furnace of love—the Sacred Heart of Jesus. *Filii hominum quousque gravi corde.*

Sons of men, how long will you be hard of heart, and love things not worth loving, nor cast a thought on one whom you have the privilege to love if you will, and who certainly "loves all that love her," and obtains for all her domestics* that double garment of true love of God and their neighbor: Divine love—Divine love. An infinite treasure, little known to men!

Daughter of the Father,
Mother of the Son,
Spouse of the Spirit,
Hail in thy glory!
Turn thy sweet eyes
On us in probation!
Help of Christians,
Aid our feebleness,
Strengthen our purposes,—
Hallow our will.
Lily of the Trinity,
Red Rose of Paradise,
Great in thy glory,
Oh, forget not
Us in our littleness!
When in probation,
When in the flames
Of purging agony,
Stoop to our rescue—
Infuse in our souls

* Domestici ejus vestiti sunt duplicibus.

Strength of endurance !
When in His kingdom
We are ushered,
Oh receive us,
Evermore dwelling
Entranced in thy love !
In the endless light
Of thy Son and our Saviour,
Thy Spouse and our dove,
Thy Father and ours,
Forever and ever ! *Amen.*

CHAPTER XLIX.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

THE HOLY MASS AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

We can increase what theologians call *the accidental glory and happiness* of our Lady and the other Saints. Every devout Hail Mary increases it. Every alms or other good work done for her love increases it. Every office recited for her love increases it. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass celebrated in her honor, O, how that increases it, and what wonderful graces it brings on the earth, and especially on those who thus cause substantial thanksgiving to be rendered to God for the wonderful privileges He has bestowed on His Virgin Mother ! *Now* there are many priests, each of whom, like

St. Andrew the Apostle, can say, "Daily I offer the Immaculate Lamb to God." *

If it be true, as venerable Bede declares, that "the Priest who, without legitimate impediment, fails to celebrate daily, deprives, so far as he can, the most Holy Trinity of praise and glory, the angels of joy, sinners of pardon, the good of help and grace, the souls in purgatory of succor and refreshment, the Church herself of immense benefit, and his own soul of medicine and remedy"—if all this be true, as it certainly is, it follows that every time the Priest of God says Mass he obtains for God this glory, and for the Blessed Virgin and the Saints: and for his own soul and the souls of others these immense benefits.

Quid retribuam. What shall we Priests render to the Lord for all he has rendered to us, unless we raise on high the chalice of salvation in sight of all our people, and pay our tribute of love and thanksgiving with the adorable body and blood of that Immaculate Lamb whom St. John saw, "as it were, slain"—*i. e.*, under appearances that remind us of death. How can we ever thank God enough, unless in this way, or begin to render a suitable tribute of thanks for raising Mary for the love of us, and for our advantage, to the great degree of glory that she now enjoys.

* "Quotidie immolo Deo Agnum Immaculatum."—*Words of St. Andrew to the tyrant.*

Alas for this world, should the day ever come when the wine and the wheat would fail for this adorable sacrifice and clean oblation, and our Lady no longer invite us to eat the bread and drink the wine that she has mingled for us! Woe to the world in such a day as that, which we pray our dearest Lady to make very remote from us, and avert altogether by her holy prayers, if it be the will of God.*

While she prays, there will be an abundance, nor need we fear for want. Let us implore her to preserve these blessings to us, and appease Almighty God for the sins of men. Let us implore her to obtain this one grace for ourselves—*never to commit sin.* God will take care of the rest. O Mary, obtain that we never offend Him, nor become unworthy the adorable sacrifice which many think so little of that they will scarce attend it, unless when it is of obligation, and some not even then.

O monstrous ingratitude of the sons of men! St. Augustine clearly says, "he who devoutly hears Holy Mass will receive a great vigor to enable him to resist mortal sin, and there shall be pardoned to him all venial sins which he may have committed up to that hour."† Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice calls Holy Mass the

* "Luxerunt sacerdotes ministri Domini, quoniam devastatum est triticum, confusum est vinum, elanguit oleum."—*Joel*, cap. i.

† Supra can. quia passus de cons. dist. 2.

compendium of all the good and beautiful to be found in the Church of God, and gives a beautiful narration of St. Bonitus,* which he says he believes really happened: "Being one night alone in church, he beheld the Blessed Virgin and a great company of Saints, some of whom asked their heavenly Lady, "Who is to celebrate at dawn?" She replied, "Bonitus, my dear servant;" and he became aware that morning at Mass that he was celebrating in presence of the great Mother of God, and of all those citizens of heaven. After Mass, the most Holy Virgin gave him a snow-white alb, of texture so fine that there is nothing to compare to it, and preserved to our day as a precious relic. Think of the decorum, the recollection and the love with which he must have celebrated that Mass!"†

Blessed Leonard calls the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, The sun of Christianity, the soul of faith, the centre of the Catholic religion. What less could he say, since it is a sacrifice at which Christ is present, at the same time both high Priest and immolated victim.‡

* Bishop of Claremont.

† Hidden Treasure, or value and excellence of Holy Mass, by blessed Leonard of Port Maurice. Reader, get this book and read it.

‡ "In the fifth chapter of the Apocalypse, St. John seems to be describing the celebration of Mass in the early Christian assemblies, as shadowing forth the glory and splendor of the adoration which all the choirs of angels and the saints are continually exhibiting to God, within His sanctuary of Heaven."—*Dr. Rock, Hierurgia.*

CHAPTER L.

Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

STABAT MATER SPECIOSA.

THOUGH there were a thousand verses similar to the great plaint of our Lady's Sorrows, *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*, yet on another subject, I am sure no Catholic would value them as he does that. Mary in sorrow is a never-failing fountain of grace and consolation; therefore *Stabat Mater Dolorosa* will always be preferred. Besides, the Church has adopted it. The Christmas carol that I introduce here, attributed to the same author," * and accompanying translation by a friend, who has favored me with it, will help to preserve this other gem of the devout Franciscan, while always we love better to keep our dear Lady company in her loneliness at the foot of the Cross, where amid bitter anguish Divine Love moulded her Immaculate Heart to receive the everlasting character of a uni-

* Jacoponus, a Friar of the Order of St. Francis, born in 1278. See works of A. F. Ozanam.

versal Mother. Here, then, is *Stabat Mater Speciosa*, to entertain yourself with in the happy Christmas season, and serve as a compendium to the chapter on the glorious nativity of Jesus Christ. And while you read it, do not forget that the poor of Jesus Christ, whom we have always with us, are the feet of His mystical body, whom in their need we are in every way bound to assist.

Stabat Mater speciosa,
Juxta fœnum gaudiosa,
Dum jacebat parvulus.

Cujus animam Gaudentem,
Lætabundam et ferventem
Pertransivit jubilus.

O quam læta et beata
Fuit illa immaculata
Mater unigeniti !

Quæ gaudebat, et ridebat,
Exultabat, cum videbat
Nati partum inclyti.

Quis est qui non gauderet (*sic*)
Christi matrem si videret
In tanto solatio ?

Quis non posset collætari
Christi matrem contemplari
Ludentem cum filio ?

Pro peccatis suæ gentis,
Christum vidit cum jumentis,
Et algori subditum.

Vidit suum dulcem natum
Vagientem, adoratum
Vili diversorio.

Nato Christo in præsepe,
Cœli cives canunt læte
Cum immenso gaudio.

Stabat senex cum puella,
Non cum verbo nec loquela
Stupescentes cordibus.

Eia mater fons amoris
Me sentire vim ardoris
Fac ut tecum sentiam !

Fac ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi complaceam.

Sancta mater istud agas ;
Prone (*sic*) introducas plagas
Cordi fixas valide.

Tui nati cœlo lapsi
Jam dignati fœno nasci
Pœnas me cum divide.

Fac me vere congaudere
Jesulino cohærere,
Donec ego vixero.

In me sistat ardor tui,
Puerino fac me frui,
Dum sum in exilio.

Hunc ardorem fac communem,
Ne facias me immunem
Ab hoc desiderio.

Virgo virginum præclara,
Mihi jam non sis amara ;
Fac me parvum rapere.

Fac ut portem pulchrum fantem (*sic*)
Qui nascendo vicit mortem
Volens vitam tradere.

Fac me tecum satiari
Nato tuo inebriari,
Stans inter tripudia.

Inflammatus et accensus,
Obstupescit omnis sensus
Tali de commercio.

Fac me nato custodiri
Verbo dei præmuniri,
Conservari gratia.

Quando corpus morietur,
Fac ut animæ donetur
Tui nati visio.

TRANSLATION.

Beside the manger cradle rude,
God's Mother in her beauty stood,
Where lay the Child divine ;
Her fervent soul elate
With joy immaculate
And ecstacy sublime.

How bright, how happy and how blessed,
That gentle maiden stood, confessed
God's Mother undefiled !
Jehovah's sole begotten Son,
The Prince of Peace, the Promised One,
Was verily her Child.
Exulting, she beheld Messiah come ;
Beheld the supernatural birth
Of the illustrious king of Heaven and earth,
Sole issue of her womb.

Who would not share
That Mother's sacred joy,
If he beheld her, blooming, there,
Filled with delight which never knows alloy ?
Rapt in the sacred contemplation
Of God the Spirit's chosen bride,
Who would not share her consolation,
Sporting at her Infant's side ?

For His people's misdemeanor
She beholdeth man's Redeemer
Amid oxen here abjected ;
To the wintry blasts subjected ;

Worshiped, waiting, suffering, honored ;
God in Heaven, on earth dishonored :
In an humble inn neglected ;
In a stable unprotected ;
While Judea's hills around
Angels' praises glad rebound
Beside the lovely girl, in awe,
The hoary patriarch stood.
Naught uttered they, as man's eternal good
Deep in their wondering souls, astounded thus they saw.

Hail Mary, in thy bliss !
Perennial fount of love and gladness, hail !
Cause me to share thy happiness,
Joy with thy joy, and with thine Infant wail.
From love of Christ, my heart
Cause nevermore to swerve,
That while I live and when I hence depart
I may thy smile deserve.
Implant His woe
Within the secret chambers of my soul,
And share with me His griefs, who, here below,
The saddened hearts of mortals to console,
From heaven came,
Deigning on hay to lie, that he might share our shame.

Cause me, with constancy sincere,
To little Jesus to adhere,
For sinners given,
Until mine eyes I close
And evermore repose
With thee and Him in Heaven.
Kindle within my breast

The fervor of thy charitable fire,
Exiled, bid me be blessed
By that strong love thine Infant can inspire.
Kindle within my heart
This sacred ardor, nor bid me depart
From this poor inn, Virgin immaculate !
Noblest of virgins, be not harsh to me ;
Let me thine Infant bear. Thine Infant great,
Oh ! let me bear him in eternity :
Thine Infant, born in shame,
Who overcame,
Even by His birth, the mouldering throne of death ;
Thine Infant, who, divine,
Bowed to the scythe of time,
And for our life gave up the vital breath.

Cause me, with thee elated,
With Christ inebriated,
To stand, spectator of thy sports sublime ;
Inflamed, inspired, enlightened,
My dazzled senses frightened
At such communion, mortal, yet divine.

Cause me to guard in truth
Thy child securely ; to secure God's word ;
To keep His grace, so seldom even heard,
So often pleading with celestial ruth.

When low my body lies,
When frail mortality within me dies,
When life's last sands have run,
Ah, bid my spirit rise
Above the starlit skies,
To see thy Son.

CONCLUSION.

"Adjuva nos Sancte Joseph."

BEHOLD, dear reader, the conclusion of a fragmentary work on the Blessed Virgin, for which the writer claims her forbearance and indulgence, as also that of all her servants, who would wish to see honor shown her more in accordance with her most exalted dignity. On this account, St. Bernard feared for himself when he preached of the Blessed Virgin, lest he should say aught little suited to the position she holds.* I, too fear, and invoke St. Joseph in ending, as I did in commencing. That the Blessed Virgin is neither known nor loved enough, is certain. The venerable Louis Grignon de Montfort felt it, and declared that devotion to our Lady, wherever best known and practiced, will cause Saints to arise who will excell in holiness all that ever lived before them, as the cedars of Libanus surpass the little trees. And in what this devotion

* "Non est quod me magis delectet et simul magis terreat quam de Beata Maria Virgine sermonem habere."

consists, he presently explains: "All perfection is placed in our being conformed to and united with our Saviour. The most perfect devotion is that which consecrates us to Him. Of all creation, Mary is the most conformed to our Divine Lord. It follows that devotion to her is what will make us most like Him; and the more a soul is consecrated to Mary, the more devoted it will be to our Lord. The final object of all our devotion is that we should belong to our Lord and Saviour, and this *absolutely*." *

May our Blessed Lady bring you and me, kind reader, to this end, which constitutes our salvation, and once more saluting her *excusatrix culparum*, I bring the present work to a conclusion! JESUS, MARY!

FEAST OF ST. GERTRUDE,
Nov. 15, 1859.

* The author above quoted adds: "As by the Blessed Virgin the Holy Ghost made our Lord's body, so He does not form the members of His mystical body but by her, and He does not dispense His gifts but by her, and through her."

HAIL TO THE SEVEN DOLORS OF MOST HOLY MARY!*

Hail, O sorrowful,
Mother of sorrows;
Mother of sorrows,
Hail, hail, hail!

FIRST SORROW.

THE PROPHECY OF SIMEON.

Hail, fair Judith,
Who hast come to the temple,
To take the sword
Which is to pierce thee!
Hail, O sorrowful, etc.

SECOND SORROW.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.

Hail, beautiful Sara,
Who camest to Egypt,
Fleeing from Herod,
And there didst take shelter!
Hail, O sorrowful, etc.

† From "A Novena to our Lady of Dolors." Translated by F. W. Faber from the Spanish, published at Merida, in Yucatan, 1836.

THIRD SORROW.

THE CHILD LOST.

Hail, turtle dove ;
Three days wandering,
Thou seekest, lamenting,
Thy tender Infant !
Hail, O sorrowful, etc.

FOURTH SORROW.

THE BEARING OF THE CROSS.

Hail, weeping Hagar,
Thou runnest along the valley,
The roads and the squares,
To the street of Bitterness !
Hail, O sorrowful, etc.

FIFTH SORROW.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

Hail, Sea of Bitterness,
Rock Impenetrable
To the nail and the hammer,
The lance and the cross so dear !
Hail, O sorrowful, etc.

SIXTH SORROW

THE ANGUISH.

Hail, O moon, full
Of anguish and ills,
Torments and pains,
And exceeding outrages !
Hail, O sorrowful, etc.

SEVENTH SORROW.

THE LONELINESS.

Hail, lonely Queen
Of troubles ;
Noemi, the most lonely
That ever lived !
Hail, O sorrowful, etc.

Hail, Macabea,
Seven times martyr,
May thy seven sorrows
Protect and defend us !
Hail, O sorrowful, etc.

Blessed and praised be
The most holy Trinity,
And the most holy Sacrament
Of the altar.
Incarnate without injury
To that virginal womb
Of Mary, conceived
Without original sin,
From the very first moment
Of her existence. *Amen, Jesu !*

Sancta Anna.

ST. ANNA.

Segneri—often quoted in the course of the preceding work—among twelve practices in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, enumerates the following: "To pay special honor to those Saints who were more nearly related to her, or more particularly devoted to her, because the first law of true friendship is conformity of will, and by it we are bound to love, not only our friend himself, but those also who are his friends." Then the servant of Mary must honor, in a more special manner, those Saints who are more dear to her: St. Joseph, her beloved spouse; St. Joachim and St. Anne, her happy parents; St. John the Evangelist, the first of her adopted children; St. John the Baptist, the first sanctified by her means; St. Bernard, who was permitted to draw milk from her virginal breasts; St. Herman, who was exalted to the honor of her espousals; St. John Damascene, the defender of her images; and St. Ildephonsus, the asserter of her virginity—as well as many others, too numerous to mention.

But what of St. Anna? She was the mother of the Mother of God! Judge the tree by the fruits. She was sterile till she conceived our dear Lady; for all that, "she was the treasury of the Almighty. And as where the treasure is, there is the heart, the Divine Heart was most near this richest treasure."* Then be devout to St. Anna, whose very name is sweet and gracious. Where next to that of the Virgin Mother shall we find a name so beautiful and attractive?

Segneri tells of a nobleman at Rheims, to whom our Lady appeared, and recommended devotion to St. Anna, her beloved mother, and taught him a prayer to say to her. St. Teresa, in her Book of Foundations, is never tired of talking about her. Speaking of a certain monastery under her invocation, she has the following: "The mercy of God is so great, that He will not fail to protect the house of the glorious St. Anna, His grandmother. May His majesty always be served therein, and may all creatures praise Him forever and ever."† The name of the "glorious St. Anna" is ever on her lips. St. Joachim and St. Anna were noble in the tribe of Israel, and possessed much wealth. When an angel appearing to the former told him he should have issue, he instantly promised to offer the child to God. "When this occurred, Joachim was in the wil-

* St. Bridget's Revelations, Chap. X.

† Book of Foundations, Chap. XXVII.

derness ; and descending to his house, he sent to the temple ten sheep for a sacrifice, and a banquet for the priests, ancients, and people."* Then the angels of God exulted, for Anna was the mother of the Mother of God. O glorious St. Anna, grace is spread on thy lips ! Let those be silent in thy praise who have never felt the power of thy intercession ! Blessed St. Anna thy mother, O Mary ever Virgin, from whom without stain of sin thou didst proceed, and of thee was born Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God !

JESUS MARIA ANNA.

HYMNUS.

Anna, pia Mater, ave,
Cujus nomen est suave,
Annam sonat gratiam :
Ave Jesse radiis florens,
Quas cœlestes das odores,
Perennem fragrantiam.
Ave, parens stellæ maris,
Quam tu nuptam contemplaris
Regis Regum Filio.
Tu, quæ sola meruisti
Parens esse Matris Christi,
Preces nostras suscipe.
Tu nos Matri, atque Patri,
Regi, ac Reginæ Poli,
Commendare non desire.

* See note to "Life of St. Joachim and St. Anna," supplementary to Gentilucci's Life of B. V. M.

TRANSLATION.

Hail, pious mother, holy Anna, hail!
Thy name falls sweetly on the Christian's ear.
They called thee gracious,* chosen to prevail
By grace, from thy conception to the bier.

Root of yon Branch, whose heavenly blossoms sent
Wide o'er the globe the perfume of its breath;
Perennial fount, aye spreading, never spent,
Lilly of Jesse, Rose of Nazareth!

Hail! mother of that Star, which placid rose
Above the flood of death, and sin, and war:
Mother of Jesus' bride; whom Heaven chose
Spouse of the King of Kings for evermore!

Receive our supplications, mother dear!
Who only merited, of all mankind,
The honor to conceive, to nurse, and rear
God's stainless Mother, for our joy designed.

Nor ever cease, we pray thee, to present
Our welfare 'fore that Mother and that Son,
The Queen and King of yonder firmament,
Whereto all just and humble souls aspire.

* The word "Anna," is the Hebrew for *gracious*.

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